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HISTORY OF PIEDMONT.

BY

ANTONIO GALLENGA.

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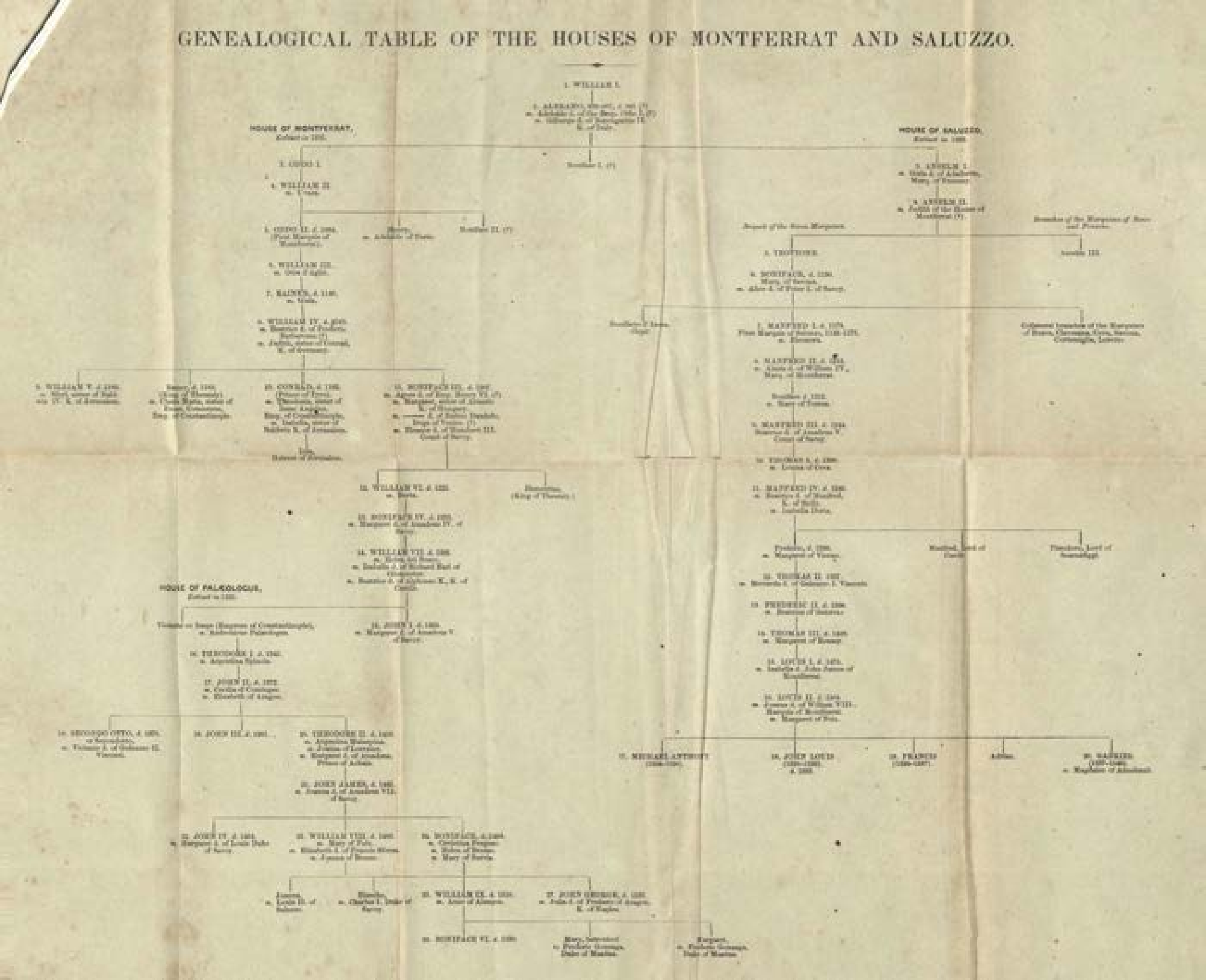
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ERRATUM.

Page 105, line 1, *for* "Henry VIII." *read* "Henry VII."

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE HOUSES OF MONTFERRAT AND SALUZZO.



HISTORY OF PIEDMONT.

CHAPTER I.

PIEDMONT AND LOMBARDY.

WESTERN Lombardy—that country which began only at a later period to be designated by the somewhat vague appellation of Piedmont—formed a tolerably compact state when it first came into the hands of Savoy, in the eleventh century.

At the fall of King Arduino, in 1014, his cousin Odelric Manfred, Count of Turin, had succeeded to most of the authority previously exercised by the Marquises of Ivrea. He was in fact the Marquis of Italy on the western side. The counties of Turin and Auriate were his by right of inheritance; and his marchional sway equally extended over the county of Asti, and that of Bredulo, its dependency. He had his own brother, Alric, appointed Bishop of Asti by the Emperor Henry II. in 1008. That nomination, it is true, called down

upon him the wrath of Arnulph, Archbishop of Milan, who, as the head of what was then called the "Diocese of Italy," exercised an almost pontifical sway all over Lombardy, and would not suffer its bishoprics to be disposed of without his consent. But the two brothers contrived, by humbling themselves at Milan, to make their peace with that dreaded adversary; and Alric, on good terms with him, and with his still mightier successor, Heribert, continued in the peaceful possession of his see, down to the time of his brother's death, in 1035, and his own, in 1036.

After the decease of her father and uncle, the Countess Adelaide still held both the diocese of Asti and its province under her patronage. She twice took up arms in behalf of the Bishop Girelmo, against whom the citizens of Asti had rebelled, and even in one instance, it is said, in 1070 or 1091, she chastised the riotous town by fire and the sword*.

The third of her sons, Oddo, as some assert, was raised to the See of Asti in 1073, and survived her, to the year 1106.

The four counties we have mentioned reached as far as the Maritime Alps and Apennines. But the March of Turin extended further east, over part, at least, of the counties of Alba or Diano, of Acqui, and Tortona, and further south, to some of the maritime districts, as far at least as Albenga. North of Turin, again, some of the fragments of the March of Ivrea had fallen to the lot of Odelric Manfred, especially the city of

* Muratori, Annali d'Italia, *ad ann.* 1070.

Ivrea and part of the Canavese, together with some of the lower lands on the Po, in the county of Lumello; but on this side, the Bishops of Novara and Vercelli, who had been chiefly instrumental in the ruin of King Arduino, had been enriched by Henry II. with the best share of the spoils of the vanquished. Leo of Vercelli lorded it not only over the county of that name, and that of St. Agatha, or Santhia, which had been formed out of it, but had secured a large portion of the patrimonial estates of Arduino in the Canavese, to the exclusion of the banished and dispersed family of that unfortunate king. He of Novara enjoyed the dignity of Count over the city of his residence, and a district of three miles round its walls, since the time of Otho I., in 969: both bishops had now extended their jurisdiction over some rural counties bordering on Lake Maggiore, as well as in Val Sesia and Val d'Ossola.

Odelric Manfred and his brother Alric had so shaped their policy as to avoid open hostilities with the Emperor Henry II. But at the death of that monarch, in 1024, they had, with other Italian lords, offered the crown of Italy to various French princes who declined it, and were therefore exposed to the vengeance of Conrad the Salic when Heribert, Archbishop of Milan, carried the election in favour of the German monarch. Owing to this circumstance, and still more to the loyal attachment of the people of Canavese and of all Western Lombardy to the memory of King Arduino, Ivrea had been taken, and delivered over to military execution,

in 1026; but Conrad's attention was soon turned to other subjects; and whilst, during the whole of his reign, he was occupied with the wars of Eastern Lombardy, and the deadly struggle between Heribert the Archbishop, and the minor nobles and burghers of Milan, the March of Turin was left in the enjoyment of comparative tranquillity.

The Countess Adelaide succeeded her father in 1035. Her first marriage with Hermann, son of Conrad's Empress, Gisla, secured her the goodwill both of that Emperor, and of his son and successor, Henry III. The reign of the latter extended from 1039 to 1056. The next German monarch, Henry IV. (1056–1106), was Adelaide's son-in-law; and he had both to sue and to bribe her for her support, at the time of his differences with Pope Gregory VII., in 1077.

Her paternal estates therefore suffered no diminution during the whole period in which she held the sway, either in the name of her husbands, or in that of her children and grandchildren; and she was as great a princess as ever, when she closed her long and glorious career in retirement at Canischio, a castle which she possessed on the banks of the Alpine stream the Gallenga, in the mountains above Cuorgnè in Canavese, on the 19th of December, 1091.

The storms however which had been silently gathering on all sides round her throne, burst out immediately after her decease, as if they had only been waiting for the signal of her parting breath.

Those very dissensions between the Empire and the

Papacy which she had had the skill to turn to her own account, brought her House to the very brink of utter ruin.

Hildebrand, the great champion of ecclesiastical supremacy, the pope-maker since 1049, had seated himself on the chair of the Vatican as Gregory VII. in 1073, and was fully bent on raising the Holy See high above the proudest thrones of the earth.

Favoured by an open rebellion in Saxony, and by the disaffection of all the great dukes of the Empire, he had all but crushed Henry IV. in Germany; and the latter, forsaken by all his partisans north of the Alps, had no resource save in Italy, where many of the Lombard prelates, and most of the cities, jealous of Roman supremacy, and at variance with Gregory, chiefly on the subject of the marriage of the priests, were ready to side with the foreign monarch.

But even a journey into Italy had become an impracticable feat for Henry, against whom the Dukes of Swabia, Carinthia, and Bavaria closed their passes of the Eastern and Central Alps. It was in these straits that the Emperor went to Burgundy, was at Besançon at Christmas, 1076, and hence proceeded to Vevay, where the Countess Adelaide and her son Amadeus II. met him, on the borders of their dominions.

The countess had no reason to show favour to Henry; for he had married her daughter Bertha, in 1066, and treated her with a harshness, baseness, and brutality characteristic of his evil nature. He had therefore to win her over by great sacrifices; and it was at this

juncture, as we have seen, that she obtained from him a grant of Burgundian lands.

Having thus made his peace with his relatives of Savoy, the Emperor crossed with them the Pennine Alps, amidst the horrors of one of the severest winters on record, and appeared in Piedmont at the moment that Gregory, on his way to Germany, where he had summoned a council at Augsburg, had arrived at Vercelli.

The favour shown to Henry by the lords and prelates of Lombardy, compelled the Pope to a hasty retreat. He shut himself up at Canossa, a strong castle between Parma and Reggio, belonging to the staunchest of his friends, the Countess Matilda of Tuscany.

Here one of the most memorable scenes in the world's history was exhibited.

Henry, whom all the support of the Italians had failed to inspire with confidence, proceeded thither alone, on foot, in a penitent's garb, a coarse woollen shirt, and for three days—cold winter-days — knelt there, fasting, bare-footed, from morning till evening, in the castle-yard, between the inner and the outer wall, suing for papal absolution.

That was acme of Roman arrogance; but above that obdurate pope, no less than above that craven monarch, shone the character of two high-minded women, Matilda of Tuscany, and Adelaide of Turin. The latter, together with her son, had followed the Emperor to this dreaded interview; and whilst the proud Matilda perhaps only insisted on the rights and interests of

the Papacy, Adelaide spoke the first words of conciliation. The Pope relented, on the 25th of January, 1077.

The reconciliation, was, however, hollow and ephemeral.

This strange war, in which an Italian pontiff had his chief support in Germany, while the German Emperor mainly relied on the aid of Italian partisans, was prolonged for eight years.

The Pope elected a new Emperor, and it was that Rudolph of Rheinfeld who had married another of the daughters of the Countess Adelaide. Henry retorted by setting up an antipope, Clement III. There was civil war in both countries. In Germany Rudolph fell in battle on the Elster, near Gera, in Saxony, on the 15th of October, 1080; and on the very same day the Lombard allies of the Emperor defeated the army of the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, at Volta, near Mantua.

Henry now followed up this double advantage, shut up Gregory in the Castle of St. Angelo, in Rome, whence Robert Guiscard, the Norman hero of Naples, only rescued the Pontiff to convey him to Salerno, where he might devour his proud heart, and die of impotent rage, in May, 1085.

The death of Gregory did not put an end to those wars. Henry IV. found himself equally opposed by Victor III., Urban II., and Paschal II., and still more strenuously by the great heroine of the Church, Matilda of Tuscany.

In the midst of these great events the Countess Adelaide died at Canischio, and Humbert II., her grandson, still a minor, was the only male representative of both houses,—that of Maurienne or Savoy, and that of Turin; but the rights of succession were at that time nowhere permanently established, and the claims of the females were on all sides urged against him.

Adelaide herself indeed had apparently acknowledged such claims. Anxious to hold the government in her hands to the last, she had, on the death of her sons (Peter I. in 1078, and Amadeus in 1080), Frederic of Montbeillard, husband of Peter's eldest daughter Agnes, invested with the March of Turin, and had even, as some writers suppose, upon the demise of Frederic, on the 21st of June, 1091, only a few months before her own death, caused the same dignity to be conferred upon Peter, son of Frederic and Agnes.

But at this time the Emperor Henry IV. was in full career of success against the Papal party. The House of Montbeillard was related to that of Matilda, and had declared in favour of the Pope.

Glad of an opportunity to injure them, since female claims seemed to be admitted in the March of Turin, the Emperor now preferred his own, as husband of Bertha, the daughter of Oddo and Adelaide, and directed his son Conrad to possess himself of his paternal inheritance.

Conrad invaded Piedmont in 1092, and ravaged es-

pecially the lands of the rich abbey of Fruttuaria, the monks of which had rather too warmly espoused the cause of the Pope*.

The Pope however, and Matilda of Tuscany, in the following year, prevailed on the German prince, Conrad, to rebel against his father. They crowned him at Monza with the iron crown of the Lombards, and urged him to an unnatural war, which lasted until his death, in 1101.

After the death of Conrad, Henry IV. met his other son, Henry, in the ranks of his foes. The latter headed his opponents in Germany, in 1106, dethroned and imprisoned him, and broke his heart. That same Henry, now the Emperor Henry V., warred as bitterly against Rome as his father had done before him. He found new causes of contention about the succession of Tuscany, which Matilda, at her death, in 1115, had bequeathed to the Church; and it was only after long and disastrous vicissitudes that the two parties came to a compromise at Worms, in 1122. Three years later, 1125, Henry V. died, and with him ended the line of Franconia.

But it was not on the side of the German Emperors that the House of Savoy had to meet the most obstinate competitors for the inheritance of the Countess Adelaide.

By the side of the House of Turin another family had for some time been flourishing in Western Lom-

* Berthold, Chronic. *ad ann.* 1092.—Urstis, Rer. Germanor. Script. Veter. iv. 396.

bardy, several members of which had contemporaneously borne the title of Marquis.

That family derived its name from one of its progenitors, Aleramo, who rose to distinction towards the middle of the tenth century.

This Aleramo, according to ancient legends*, came as an orphan to the court or camp of the Emperor Otho I., where he won the good graces of Alasia, or Adelaide, the Emperor's daughter.

She eloped with him, and lived in concealment in the grottoes and woods of the Apennines above Savona or Albenga, where the valiant husband provided for the wants of a growing family by manual labour as a charcoal-burner.

After fifteen years of this obscure existence, an opportunity offered itself to Aleramo of displaying his own valour and that of his son, Oddo, a mere boy, before the Emperor's eyes, at the siege of Brescia. This led to a discovery, and restoration of the long-lost couple to favour; when Aleramo was invested with the Marchional rank, and extensive estates between the Tanaro, the Orba, and the sea (March 23rd, 967).

So far the legend, which must not be rejected as altogether fabulous.

Modern genealogists have given this Aleramo a father, one Count William, a Frenchman, whom they describe as coming into Italy in the suite of Guido

* Jacob. ab Áquis, Chronic. Imaginis Mundi, Monum. Hist. Patr. Scriptor. iii. 15331–538.—San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 2.

of Spoleto, at the time that this Duke laid claims to the crown of Italy, in opposition to Berengarius I., in 889.

Aleramo himself took part in those wars which Arduino Glabrione of Turin and other lords waged against the Saracens of Frassineto. Indeed we have seen that it was probably under the guidance of this Aleramo that the citizens of Acqui repulsed those marauders from their walls, in 933. It was by these important services to the cause of Christianity that he won the esteem of the German Emperor, as he had previously secured the goodwill of Berengarius II., King of Italy, his marriage with whose daughter Gilberga seems, to say the least, as authentic as that with the love-sick German princess of the legend*.

The title of Marquis and very broad lands were already possessed by Aleramo under Berengarius II., and they could only be confirmed and extended by Otho I., when Aleramo abandoned the fortunes of the Italian King to follow those of his Saxon conqueror.

Where those possessions lay, and to which of them the title of Marquis was attached, will never be sufficiently clear.

The name of Montferrat (Mons ferratus, Mons ferax, or Mons pharatus), originally that of a single spot, a castle, or village, was at first applied to that range of hills which stretches along the right bank of the Po, opposite to Turin, from Moncalieri to Superga.

* Durandi, Antico Piemonte Traspadano, p. 116.—Balbo, Frammenti sul Piemonte, p. 11.

It was in later times extended over the whole of that hilly region as far as Casale and Valenza, and to the south as far as the dominions of the House that took its name from it. But in the days of Aleramo that narrow original district was certainly not a march, and not even a county. It is nevertheless far from improbable that it belonged to him, and that upon these hills his domains bordered upon those of the Counts of Turin, whilst they stretched southward over parts of the counties of Alba and Acqui, and reached down to the sea at Savona.

Aleramo had four sons, and to them genealogists have striven hard to trace the various branches of that family, or indeed of that whole tribe of marquises, who spread so widely in after-ages, and the two most conspicuous of whom were for a long time the great rivals of Savoy south of the Alps, the Houses of Montferrat and Saluzzo.

The House of Montferrat descends from Oddo, son of Aleramo, and, through William II., to a second Oddo, the first of his house who seems distinctly to have borne the title of Marquis of Montferrat. This Oddo II. flourished between 1040 and 1084; his brother Henry was the second husband of Adelaide, Countess of Turin.

The House of Montferrat continued in obscurity during the two or three following generations, and only attained historical importance under William IV., called the Elder, from 1140 to 1183.

From Anselmo, another son of Aleramo, in the third

generation*, sprang Bonifácio, called Del Vasto, Marquis of Savona, who, in 1082, married Alice, daughter of Oddo of Maurienne and Adelaide of Turin. Immediately on the death of Adelaide, in 1091, he occupied Albenga, and advancing upon the counties of Auriate and Bredulo, claimed them in his wife's name; and as Alice's sister, Agnes, driven from Turin by Conrad, son of the Emperor Henry IV., sought shelter with Boniface at Savona, it was as a friend and protector of the House of Savoy that he took from it those counties, which were not for a long course of ages restored to it.

Boniface died in 1130. Of him were born seven legitimate sons†, each of them a Marquis. These, together with some of his natural children, and the offspring of his brothers and uncles, actually peopled those southern counties of Piedmont with Marchional Houses, and parcelled the territory amongst them. Such were the Houses of Bosco, Ponzone, Ceva, Busca, Del Carretto, etc. One of the lawful sons of Boniface, Manfred, first bore the title of Marquis of Saluzzo, from 1142 to 1175.

There is little doubt that the rise of these "Aleramides," especially of the two Houses of Montferrat and Saluzzo, might from the very outset have proved an insurmountable obstacle to the progress of Savoy

* See the pedigrees of Montferrat and Saluzzo, at the end of this volume.

† Muletti, Memorie appartenenti alla Città ed ai Marchesi di Saluzzo, i. 117.

in Italy, and that either of those houses or both might eventually have driven her across the Alps. For several generations, from Humbert II. to Thomas I. of Savoy, during the reign of four of its princes (1091–1233), the House of Savoy was almost utterly eclipsed in Italy by these Aleramic dynasties, and it was long, even after the latter epoch, ere it could obtain the upperhand over them.

But it was not merely by a strife amongst the princely houses that the destinies of Western Lombardy were to be accomplished. A new power had risen; a new life had developed itself. The Italian cities had attained independence.

The Bishops, who had been trusted with almost unlimited sway under the Emperors of the House of Saxony (961–1024), had again lost it under those of the House of Franconia (1024–1125).

That same Heribert, Archbishop of Milan,—the greatest mitred head there has been, except at Rome,—he who had bestowed the crown of Italy upon Conrad the Salic, and helped him to that of Burgundy, was however unable to keep his seat in that great thriving town from which his pastoral staff derived its main strength. The minor nobles, the freemen of the Equestrian Order,—"Valvassors" they were called,—stung by the arrogance of his officers and feudal dependants,—rose against him in 1035; they joined in a strong faction, which received the name of "La Motta" (or Mutiny); and, worsted in the streets of Milan, they carried on the war in the country; they were joined

by men of their own rank from other cities, and gave Heribert a battle at Campo Malo, in 1036. Overpowered in that and other encounters, opposed by Conrad the Salic, taken prisoner, making good his escape by intoxicating his German guards, Heribert now fell back for support on men of inferior rank, on the "Valvassins," vassals of the "Valvassors," on the lower burghers, on the very serfs of the soil.

These he mustered up; he called them to liberty; he gave them the "carroccio,"—a great heavy car, all bedizened with red cloth, surmounted by an altar, and a very high pole bearing the city standard, which, drawn by four pair of oxen, was always in the centre of the burgher-host, both on the march and in the fight, and which became afterwards the ark of the covenant, the emblem of patriotism, in every town of Lombardy.

There ensued a long war of class against class, not in Milan only, but in every city and throughout the land, the great result of which was the levelling of ranks, the fusion of classes, the birth of a people.

The Emperor Conrad the Salic and Henry III. attempted at first, and were even solicited, to take part in the strife. They held up now one party, now the opposite, the Bishops, the Motta, and more frequently they stepped in for arbitrament. But by degrees their aid was rejected, and their mediation resisted. The hatred of the Italians for the Northern soldiery made them intolerant of the presence even of those just and otherwise not unpopular rulers. Dis-

heartened by the scenes of bloodshed, by which, owing to mere national antipathy, the march of a German army was everywhere marked, those two princes felt the necessity of withdrawing their countenance from Italy, and allowing what seemed to them hopeless disorder to have its own free course.

But that apparent confusion became far worse confounded, when, at the death of Henry III., in 1056, he was succeeded by his son, Henry IV., a prince of far dissimilar character, despised even more than hated, enfeebled besides by factions in Germany, and by his deadly contests with Gregory VII. and his successors in the Papacy. Not only did he never exercise any control over the Lombard cities, but he had for a long time no support except amongst some of them—especially amongst a part of the clergy who opposed the reforming measures of Gregory VII., with regard to the marriage, or, as he called it, "concubinate" of the priests.

But when the "reformers," or anti-concubinarians, gained the upperhand, when Milan declared against Henry IV. in 1093, and ever afterwards stood up against him, and against his successor Henry V., the Imperial power was found to have sunk below contempt, and every petty town dared now to shut its gates against a German monarch, and set all the might of his arms at defiance.

Henry V. died in 1125, and there ensued a contested election in Germany between Frederic of Hohenstaufen, Duke of Swabia, and a Saxon lord, Lo-

thaire of Suplimburg. The German princes declared in favour of the latter; but Milan and her allies were in favour of the Swabian house, and crowned Conrad, brother of Frederic, in 1128.

Opposed by the Pope, by Pavia and other towns, Conrad had to quit Italy, and Lothaire was universally acknowledged, and crowned in the Lateran (the Vatican being in the power of an Anti-Pope, who opposed him,) in 1132. The towns of Upper Italy were however less submissive than ever, and Lothaire had to undertake a campaign against them in 1136, in the course of which he destroyed Bologna, Pavia, and Turin.

He died without any decisive achievement, nevertheless, in 1137. At his death the contest for the appointment of his successor raged fiercer than ever in Germany. The candidates were now the same Conrad, the rival of Lothaire, and Henry the Proud, of Este, Duke of Bavaria and Saxony.

The feuds between those two Houses gave name to two factions which had already been in existence, both in Germany and Italy. Conrad carried the election in 1138; Henry of Este died in 1139; but his brother, Guelph, continued in open hostility with the Hohenstaufen for eight years; giving his own name to the anti-Imperial party; whilst the partisans of the Swabians, or Imperialists, went by the name of Ghibelines, from the town or castle of Waiblingen, one of the original holds of the Hohenstaufen.

In these contests Conrad III. was engaged until

1147, when, having come to a reconciliation with Guelph, he accompanied him on the second crusade. He returned in 1150, and died in 1152, just as he was preparing for a mighty expedition against Italy.

Italy for the last fifteen years had seen no Imperial army, and might well have forgotten the very existence of an Emperor.

From Conrad the Salic to the election of Conrad III.'s successor, Frederic I. Barbarossa, in 1152, all general government had come to an end. To the local feuds of class against class, and to the jealousy of city against city, new subjects of contention had been added. Involved in Imperial and Papal hostilities, bewildered by the conflicting claims of Cæsars and anti-Cæsars, of popes and anti-popes, the Lombard communities became every day more awake to the necessity of self-government, to the consciousness of self-existence.

The anarchy in which the expulsion of a bishop, or the vacancy of a see, consequent upon a schism or contested election, plunged them, compelled them to set up rulers of their own,—a kind of provisional regency or municipal council. For those "Scabini" and other city officers, who had always governed by the appointment of the Count or Bishop, magistrates were now substituted by popular election. These the Bishop, on his restoration, anxious to come to a compromise with his subjects, was often fain to approve and confirm in their office. In progress of time, the right itself of election was admitted, and the great principle

of local government established. The Bishop, deprived in the end of legal power, was thrown upon the resources of mere moral ascendancy, or upon the more questionable shifts of party leadership or family connections.

Thus were municipal institutions brought to maturity. The very earliest seeds of them are by diligent inquirers traced as far back as the tenth, ninth, and even eighth centuries—in those guilds and fraternities of working-men, to which privileges, exemptions, and even positive rights were granted, and in those "good customs," of which the town-charters of after-times were mainly a confirmation.

But it was only towards the close of the eleventh century that we find a municipal government regularly organized. Those improvised magistrates took the name of "consuls," borrowed from old Roman traditions, towards the year 1093; in which, perhaps, the earliest mention of them occurs. The consuls were three, or six, or even as many as twelve, and they were charged both with judicial and executive functions. Under them was a Council of the Elders (Anziani), or of Trust (di Credenza), a deliberative body, dealing with matters of ordinary interest, whilst the most important questions were referred to a great council or senate, or to the general assembly of the people.

But the Lombards soon became proficient in other matters besides those of local government. The cities learnt to join into leagues. In the same year, 1093, in which consuls are first named,—when the Countess

Matilda and the Pope set up Conrad, son of Henry IV., against his own father, and crowned him at Monza,—the towns of Lombardy were already split into two factions, one of which, with Milan at its head, had espoused the cause of the young king, whilst Pavia, with other towns, still upheld the rights of the old Emperor. These factions, under the names of Matildians and Henricians, already followed a papal or an imperial standard. The troubles of Germany at the time of Conrad III. gave them, as we have seen, their war-cry of Guelphs and Ghibelines.

Truly the first use the Lombard cities made of their free existence, was to inflict the greatest possible harm upon one another; nor did they always act from mistaken zeal for some supreme cause, as that of the Empire or the Church. Indeed, king or pope were often little more than an idle pretext; and those unnatural feuds too often sprang from innate envy or animosity, or from vulgar views of self-aggrandisement.

Thus, as early as 1059, that is, before the wars between Henry IV. and Gregory VII. had commenced, we meet with a declaration of war by Milan against Pavia. The reason assigned was, that the Pavese refused to accept a bishop appointed to their see by Henry IV., then a minor, on the plea that they had had no hand in his election. But whatever the real case might be, it is a remarkable fact, not only that those towns asserted the right of private warfare, but that Pavia actually took foreign troops into her pay, whilst Milan strengthened herself by an alliance with

Lodi; so that both exercised some of the most important privileges of sovereign states*.

Again, from 1100 to 1107, those two old Lombard capitals were striving for pre-eminence, and this time all the minor towns were enlisted on either side. From 1107 to 1111, Milan turned all her might against Lodi, which in the end she took, and utterly destroyed; and a war broke out in 1118 against Como, which lasted ten years, and which the historians of that city not unjustly compare to the siege of Troy, inasmuch as the Comasques had to hold out against the combined efforts of Milan and all the Lombard and Ligurian cities; and their resistance against such fearful odds, not only behind their walls, but on the open field, and on the hills and lakes, equals aught we read of in epic times.

Besides these main contests, to which a general interest was attached, there were other more obscure and aimless quarrels between Milan and Cremona, Pavia and Verona, Verona and Padua, Padua and Venice, Venice and Ravenna, etc. etc., a complication of feuds and alliances, of hatreds and jealousies, which the diligence of no historian has yet been able to unravel.

It may not be unimportant to observe, nevertheless, by way of extenuation of the enormous guilt of our forefathers, that some of their dissensions had been handed down from generation to generation, from old feudal times, and before the towns possessed any self-government; and others had their sources in feelings

* Muratori, Annali d' Italia, *ad ann.* 1059.

hallowed in those melancholy times by the universal consent of mankind.

Thus, if we were to examine those amongst the earliest Lombard wars which stand forth most conspicuous in the records of the times—that of Lodi and Como—we find that the Milanese only took arms against the former city, to assert the right of supremacy of their metropolitan see over the minor diocese, —a right which had, nearly a century before (in 1026), been established by Conrad the Salic in behalf of Archbishop Heribert*; a right which the free citizens of Milan, had they been ever so disinterested, had hardly sufficient discrimination to feel authorized to waive.

In the war of Como, again, the Milanese were set up by their priesthood. The Comasques had a bishop of their own, by name Guido de' Grimaldi, whom they had received at the hands of Gelasius II., to them the lawful Pope. But the Emperor Henry V., and the anti-pope Gregory VIII., took it into their heads to send them another bishop, Landulph de Carcano, a Milanese, a schismatic prelate, who had already been forced upon the same diocese by Henry IV. years before.

The intruder was fallen upon by the incumbent, was taken prisoner, and several Milanese noblemen of his retinue fell in the encounter. The women of these latter went frantic about the streets of Milan, with loud wailing and dishevelled hair, dragging upon

* Leo, Geschichte der Italienischen Staaten, i. 251.

the pavement the blood-stained shirts of the slain. It was on a festive day, and the people were crowding to the churches, when, on the threshold of the cathedral, they were met by the Archbishop, Jordan, at the head of his clergy, who in an impassioned "homily," raked up all the grievances of Milan against Como, called aloud for revenge, then closing the doors of the church, threatened the people with the interdict, unless they marched against the offending city to demand blood for blood*.

Such were then the ministers of the God of Peace!

But the blood shed by the Lombards in these fatal discords, was not the very worst evil attendant upon them. They crushed liberty in the bud. They taught the people to refer all differences to an appeal to arms. They established more firmly than ever the right of the strongest. They taught those burghers to forgo all advantages, to sacrifice all interests, and freedom itself, in a blind pursuit of ambition or revenge; they gave an undue weight to mere combative virtues; they set up a mounted aristocracy, an equestrian order, in a democratic commonwealth; finally they laid a free town prostrate at the feet of a successful military leader.

Thus the Consular Government could scarcely have been established at Milan; indeed the Archbishop Heribert had hardly been driven from the town, in 1036, when the chief of the popular party of La Motta, by name Lanzo, tyrannized over the city.

* Sismondi, Histoire des Républiques Italiennes, i. 251.

Not long afterwards, from the midst of those factions between Concubinarian and Reformed priests, to which the zeal of the Roman Hildebrand gave origin, another popular leader, by name Herlembald, arose at Milan. He had found sympathy with the people, in consequence of an outrage perpetrated by one of the concubinarian priests on the person of his wife, to avenge which he put himself at the head of the Reformers, and held an absolute sway from the year 1058 to 1075, when he fell in one of those almost daily skirmishes of which every Lombard town was then the theatre*.

Both Lanzo and Herlembald were men of noble blood.

The victory of the burghers over the upper classes had led not to the destruction, but merely to the absorption of the latter by the former. The compromise between the Nobles and Plebeians was complete. Driven at first from the cities over which they had held lordly sway, then pursued further into their castle-homes in the country, the Nobles had made a stand nowhere, or only in the remotest fastnesses of the Alps and Apennines; by far the greater number had given up the contest, laid down their arms, and sued for a reconciliation. They had returned to the cities, and had asked for adoption by them; they had laid aside their titles, in some instances even their names; they had themselves inscribed in the guilds and brotherhoods of humble artisans;

* Muratori, Annali d'Italia, *ad ann.* 1075.

they had taken rank as burghers; they had merged into the people.

From the very earliest date, as Guizot justly observes*, this amalgamation of races, this infusion of high-mettled blood into the veins of the common mass, constituted the main difference between Italy and the rest of Europe.

In France and Germany there were masters and slaves: the two orders of society stood apart, each on their own ground—the landed interest against the boroughs, the country arrayed against the city. In Italy, and perhaps in some parts of Southern France, the town everywhere invaded the rural districts; the whole country became literally *civilized*. The nobles brought their spirit and energy, their high courage and enterprise, into the towns of their adoption; and the nation had thus, for two centuries at least, the start of her neighbours.

Unfortunately the nobles brought too large a stock of their spirit and activity. They proved but too restless and troublesome burgesses in the end. They had been compelled to buy or build themselves houses in the cities, and they reared up fortresses. They established themselves at the town-gates, all around the walls, and in the outskirts. They shut in the town, under pretence of screening it from harm. These new burghers had leisure, they had arms and horses, affluent means, warlike propensities. They mustered together, they constituted themselves into a mounted

* Guizot, History of Civilization in France, Lecture xix.

guard—the shield and sword of the city. They bade the townsfolk toil on in security, while they took upon themselves the battles of the commonwealth. But their fighting was not always defensive, nor were their arms always turned against outward enemies. They distracted the town with factions, filled it with the clamour of their old family feuds; they appealed to the worst passions of the multitude, enlisted it in their quarrels, involved it in their schemes of outrage and revenge.

It was in vain that the populace rid itself of these riotous fellow-citizens by wholesale proscriptions, by levelling their turreted mansions to the ground. Aristocracy came back under a thousand disguises. The plain burgher himself had become inoculated with it. As the lord had at first stooped to the rank of the trader or artisan, so the prosperous merchant or manufacturer now gave himself the airs, and courted the fellowship, of the born nobleman. The upstart patrician, the new man ("gente nuova," as Dante has it,) took the place of the old feudal aristocrat. Wealth superseded birth: gold ruled instead of iron.

Besides the merest forms of government, in short, it is hardly possible to go so far back in the records of those Lombard republics as to find traces of genuine democracy. The various classes had hardly blended together for a common purpose, at the time of the decline of episcopal power, in the eleventh century, when the finer blood emerged as if by native virtue, and the mass had to follow its impulse, whether it led

to the overthrow of imperial power, or to the setting up of domestic tyranny. Ever after, a faction was the state. The ruling party might, and did actually for a long time, allow the appointment of magistrates in the usual popular way; but both electors and candidates instinctively obeyed the great prevailing influence, and the tyranny was all the more irresistible as it was invisible. It was indeed the government of the majority; but of a majority which brooked no opposition, which dealt to the worsted party nothing short of banishment and confiscation, utter annihilation. The vanquished party had no redress but in violent reaction. Circumstances, or its own valour, could give it the upperhand, when it became its turn to be intolerant, exclusive, unsparing. There was utter confusion of right and wrong; all justice and virtue were measured by the standard of Guelphism and Ghibelinism.

Such was Italian life for nearly five centuries. These crying evils had, it is true, only a gradual development; but the germs existed from very early days, and had already attained an alarming growth, at the time that Frederic I., Barbarossa, was preparing to put Lombard freedom to the test of long and disastrous struggles, in 1152.

CHAPTER II.

THE LOMBARD LEAGUE.

We have been writing the history of Piedmont whilst tracing the successive phases of popular emancipation in Lombardy.

From Conrad the Salic to Frederic Barbarossa life was sufficiently uniform, and interests identical, all over the country situated between the Alps, the Apennines, and the Adriatic. The cities of Western Lombardy had advanced at the same rate as their sisters beyond the Ticino. Turin had evinced symptoms of insubordination at a very early period. It had driven away its bishop, Ammulus, towards the year 897. The cause of dissension is not clearly known, but it is stated that he was kept from his see for three years, and that, being restored by peaceful agreement, he abused the force he had acquired by demolishing the strong bastions and high towers with which the town was encompassed all round*.

* Chronic. Novaliciens. Mon. Hist. Pat. Script. iii. 91.—Meyranesii Pedemont. Sacr. p. 142.

The counts of the race of Arduino Glabrione seem to have held a firmer grasp of the city in the following century. Still even Odelric Manfred, in the plenitude of his power, had to draw his sword against the townspeople in 1031.

A young abbot of Breme, in Lomellina, by name Odilon, had, by the levity of his conduct, incurred the displeasure of Conrad the Salic, who gave that rich abbey as a fief to Alberic, bishop of Como. The abbot and his monks, loth to do homage to a new lord, quitted their monastery and sought the protection of the Marquis of Turin. Thither the Bishop followed them, and Manfred, awed perhaps by an Imperial mandate, delivered those refractory vassals into the hands of their liege. This infringement of the right of asylum roused the indignation of the Turinese, who rose in arms for the rescue of the prisoners. Manfred had to put forth his might, and the insurrection was quelled*.

Alric, brother of Manfred, bishop of Asti, seems equally to have been able to support himself in his place, since he was strong enough, in 1036, to take arms in behalf of the Archbishop Heribert of Milan, and fought by the side of his metropolitan against the party of La Motta, at Campo Malo. Indeed the aid that Alric brought into the field was of such great importance, that his fall (he was either killed on the spot, or mortally wounded and only survived a short time) struck discouragement into the

* Terraneo, Adelaide Illustrata, ii. 188.

prelatic party, and turned the chances of the battle against them*.

After Alric's death Asti became less manageable under his successors, and Adelaide had once, or perhaps twice, occasion to chastise it with the greatest severity; the last occurrence seems to have been in 1091, the year of her death†.

After her death came the deluge. The counties of Auriate and Bredulo were, as we have seen, lost to her descendants, and permanently occupied by Boniface of Savona; that of Turin was held for a short time by Conrad, the rebel son of Henry IV., and we are then for many years without any distinct account of its fate.

It has been justly remarked by Sismondi‡, that the epoch of the Wars of Investitures, or wars between the Empire and the Papacy (1077–1122), is that in which Italian chroniclers leave us most at fault, so that it is chiefly from German sources that we derive our knowledge of general events; whilst of the universal, rapid, yet silent revolution, which gave the Lombard towns a new life, we are left merely to judge by the final results.

Adelaide dies in 1091, rarely opposed and invariably victorious over the cities placed under her sceptre: Humbert II., her successor, makes his appearance

* Muratori, Annali d'Italia, *ad ann.* 1036.—Terraneo, Adelaide Illustrata, ii. 235.

† Grassi, Storia d'Asti, i. 93.

‡ Sismondi, Républiques Italiennes, i. 241.

only seven years later, and is fain to negotiate with that same city of Asti, so roughly handled by his grandmother, not even on terms of equality, but of actual dependence.

Anxious to obtain the support of the Astesans against Boniface of Savona, Humbert II. signed a treaty, on the 25th of July, 1098, by which he gave up several important places, freed the traders of Asti from tolls or duties throughout his states, promised protection to the whole territory of the diocese, and engaged never to quit Lombardy, never to come to terms with their common enemy Boniface of Savona, till their differences were settled to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned*.

The fact is, that during that short interval, or immediately afterwards, the Piedmontese towns had organized themselves into free states after the manner of other Lombard cities. Biandrate, a small town between Vercelli and Novara, is, in fact, the very first known to have had consuls in 1093†. Asti was a free city in 1098; and her example was followed by Chieri, Turin, and Nizza. Already, in 1111, Henry V. granted to the city of Turin the "Roman road," which led through their town and up the valley of Susa to the Alps, together with the jurisdiction over the traders and wayfarers who frequented it. Asti was very soon forward in the race of freedom, and in the attainment of commercial importance. The title

* Durandi, Piemonte Cispadano Antico, p. 346.

† Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, i. 158.

of Count, that Oddo its bishop had received from the Emperor Henry IV. in 1095, was soon reduced to a dead letter; and its traders, no less than those of Chieri, had, as results from the very treaty with Humbert II. of Savoy, found their way across the Alps, where they introduced the first rudiments of banking business, and gave some dignity to the money-lending trade, which had been hitherto monopolized by the Jews*.

But although the western division of Lombardy had not been remiss in its political advancement, it exhibited nevertheless this peculiarity, that it had less thoroughly triumphed over the feudal aristocracy of the former period.

The March of Tuscany had come to an end at the death of the Countess Matilda in 1115. That of Verona had even previously withdrawn itself from the Dukes of Carinthia, with whose states it had been incorporated by the German emperors, with a view to secure that important gate of the valley of the Adige†. In the latter, the Ezzelini, though they began under Conrad the Salic, had not yet risen to notoriety; and, in the former, of the supposed branches of the old House of Tuscany, that of Este had sunk to the burgher-rank at Ferrara, from which it was to emerge by a new process; and those of Malaspina and Pallavicino had retired to their nests in the Apennines of Parma and Lunigiana.

* Hallam's Middle Ages, ii. 402.

† Leo, Italienisch. Staaten, i. 505.

In Piedmont the nobles, although vanquished, had neither been destroyed nor assimilated.

The House of Savoy, truly, had fallen back upon Aosta and Susa, affected estrangement from Italian matters, and busied itself with other pursuits. Humbert II. died in 1103, without any better achievement than his losing bargain with Asti, in 1098. Amadeus III. reconquered Turin, in 1130 it is supposed; but that town was taken by the Emperor Lothaire in 1136, and this latter, by no means partial to Amadeus, had set up the claims of the Bishop Albert, in competition with those of the Count; and a collision between the two powers ensued, which rapidly advanced the liberties of the city*.

The crusade of Amadeus III. in 1147, and his death in the year following, did not favour the interests of his house south of the Alps; so that Humbert III., his successor, during his long minority, held indeed no greater rank in Italy than that implied by the title so often given to the princes of his family—that of Marquises of Susa.

The Aleramic dynasties held in the meanwhile a different position.

Boniface of Savona profited by the calamities of Savoy, and held his ground against Asti, whilst this city set up one of his natural sons, Boniface of Incisa, against him. The counties he had acquired either by fair means or otherwise, he was able to keep in the main until his death in 1130, when his inheritance

* Pingon, Augusta Taurinorum, p. 29.—Cibrario, Torino, i. 192.

rather suffered from partition than from foreign attacks: and at any rate, his son Manfred, who took the title of Marquis of Saluzzo in 1142, was still a prince of some consequence.

The House of Montferrat had gone even further; and although its rise is matter of considerable obscurity, there is no doubt that, in 1147, William IV. the elder, placed as he was in the midst of these Piedmontese cities, was yet able to give battle to them all single-handed, and that he stood up, alone, a mighty wreck of feudal power, when all his order had either been scattered, or ground to dust around him*.

But besides these principal feudal dynasties, the rural districts of Piedmont, especially the Langhe of the county of Alba, the Canavese of the province of Ivrea, were still the hotbeds of that castled or free nobility, which was becoming scarce in all the rest of the country.

Away from the cities, aided by the natural strength of their mountain-homes, those petty lords yielded no ground, and indeed were not attacked. Under nominal allegiance to a bishop, or with absolute independence, which meant doing homage to no one but the Emperor, they held under their sway both their peasantry and the humbler towns within their reach. Conspicuous amongst them were the various branches of the Valperga, St. Martin, etc. etc., a cluster of families

* "Qui pene solus ex Italiæ Baronibus civitatum effugere poterat imperium." Otton. Frisingens. Gest. Friderici I.—Rer. Italic., vi. 710.

flourishing in Canavese, who boasted a descent from either one or the other of the marchional houses of Ivrea who had successively occupied the throne of Italy—that of Berengarius II. and Arduino*.

Conspicuous even above these was the family of the Counts of Biandrate, who took their name from the little town between Vercelli and Novara before mentioned, who claimed the same origin with the House of Montferrat, and were at any rate frequently allied with it, and who had large estates both in Canavese and Montferrat, as well as in Val Sesia and Val d'Ossola, and, at a later time, extended themselves even beyond the Alps, in Valais†.

Such was the state of parties in Upper Italy, at the election of King Frederic I. as King of Germany at Frankfort, in 1152, March 5th.

This monarch had come to the throne under auspicious circumstances. The blood of the Este and of the Hohenstaufen ran equally in his veins; and the factions of Guelphs and Ghibelines had unanimously concurred in his exaltation. A tranquil ruler in Germany, he had leisure to turn his attention to the affairs of distracted Italy. He was an upright and generous, but stern man. His first movement towards Italy was that of deep concern at the anarchy and division to which he saw it a prey, a wish to restore the reign of justice and peace.

At a diet held at Constance, in March, 1153, two

* Costa, Maison Royale de Savoie, i. 64.

† Gingins-la-Sarraz, Comtes de Biandrate, p. 4.

burghers of Lodi, bearing crosses in their hands, threw themselves at his feet, imploring his protection against the Milanese, who, not content with the destruction of their town two-and-forty years before, continued to tread down the scattered citizens, as if bent on their utter extermination. Frederic heard their complaints with humanity, and sent messengers to the Milanese to plead in favour of the subjected city. His messengers were treated with scorn and rudeness, and even his Imperial letters torn and trodden underfoot. The report of these indignities filled the measure of the King's wrath, and the Italian expedition was resolved upon. His uncle and predecessor, Conrad III., had already contemplated such an enterprise, so that the means for the campaign were already at hand. Frederic crossed the Tyrolese Alps in October, 1154, and descended to the plain of Roncalia, on the Po, near Piacenza, where the Diet of the kingdom of Italy was usually held.

Here the citizens of Lodi and Como preferred their grievances against Milan, and here also William, Marquis of Montferrat, brought forward his complaints against the towns of Chieri and Asti, which, not content with claiming independence as free republics for themselves, had carried on war against his vassals, and reduced them to obedience. The Bishop of Asti, Anselmo, likewise stood up as a denouncer of the insolence of his flock.

After some hesitation, and balancing between the parties, Frederic declared against Milan, and marched

against it. He took some of its castles—Rosate, Trecate, and Galiate,—then, as if unwilling to come to a closer engagement with that powerful city, he turned his arms against Western Lombardy.

He came into the territory of Vercelli and Turin, confirmed the bishop of the latter city in his power, and so strengthened him that he never afterwards met the Turinese in the ranks of his enemies; then, crossing the Po above that city, he advanced upon Chieri and Asti. The people of both towns had forsaken their dwellings, and the German host had to vent its fury upon the empty walls, which they burnt to the ground. Tortona attempted a more strenuous resistance. It disregarded the King's orders to depart from the alliance of the Milanese and to join that of Pavia. It sustained a two months' siege, from February 13th to April 15th, 1155, and on the latter-named day surrendered: the citizens were ordered to quit it—the town had ceased to exist. The victorious monarch marched back to Pavia, there put on the iron crown of the Lombards, then proceeded southwards to Rome, where, after chastising the Romans; delivering up Arnold of Brescia to the vengeance of Pope Adrian IV., and after humbling himself to that pontiff, he received from him the golden crown of Charlemagne, on the 18th of June, 1155. On his return he destroyed Spoleto, disbanded his army near Ancona, and, on his way back to Verona, ran great risk of falling into the hands of the Veronese, who were already breaking out into rebellion against him.

Frederic had not yet quitted Lombardy on his way to Rome, when Milan, emboldened by his evident disinclination to an encounter with her, had taken the offensive, if not against him, at least against his friends.

She had sheltered the houseless fugitives of Tortona, she had rebuilt their town, and now, upon the return of the Emperor to Germany, she laid waste the lands of the Pavese, and wreaked her vengeance upon the Marquis of Montferrat. These wars continued without intermission till the year 1158, when Barbarossa re-appeared with a far greater armament than on the previous occasion, bent upon bringing the work of the subjugation of Lombardy to a termination.

He came down with a great host from the Tyrol, whilst two other great divisions of his forces crossed the Alps above Como and the Great St. Bernard. On his way he smote Brescia with the sword; then, on the 8th of August, he stood with 100,000 men before the walls of Milan. He starved out the town, which he could not have stormed; and on the 7th of December, Guido, Count of Biandrate, a man equally respected by both parties, induced the Milanese to capitulate, and obtained fair terms for them from the conqueror.

Frederic however called together a second Diet at Roncalia, where, basely seconded by the Italian clergy, especially by the Archbishop of Milan and by the lawyers of the Bologna school, he so far succeeded in setting up the paramount rights of empire, that, in

open violation of the terms of the capitulation of Milan, by which he had bound himself to respect the consular government of that city, he claimed the power of appointing magistrates, and sent his own *Podestàs*, or mayors, charged with the administration of justice, not only at Milan and in the cities which had sided with it, but even in those which had faithfully followed the Imperial standard.

Milan, Brescia, and Crema resisted his orders, broke out into fresh rebellion; and drove the Podestàs from their walls.

Frederic again took the field against them, laid siege to Crema on the 4th of July, 1159, and after a defence of six months, during which the heroism of the besieged was put to cruel tests by the wanton barbarism of the Emperor, the latter brought the town into his hands on the 26th of January, 1160. He was now reinforced from Germany, and carried on a desultory warfare against Milan, which was at last brought to the very walls of the town. Milan held out for nine months: at the end of these the consuls advised further resistance, but were overruled by the populace, and forced to surrender the town at discretion, March 1st, 1162. For a few days the vindictive monarch, as if to add the torture of suspense to the miseries of the vanquished people, left them in uncertainty as to their fate. On the 16th, he bade them quit their homes to a man; on the 26th, he gave up the town to the wrath of the rival cities which had been fighting in his suite, Pavia, Cremona, Lodi,

Como, and Novara; and these acquitted themselves so well of their destructive task, that, after six days, scarcely the fiftieth part of the proud city was left standing*.

There are German authorities, indeed, who would fain persuade us that no great harm was done after all†; but we are willing to abide by the conclusion of a diligent English writer, that "in a few days the pillaged churches stood alone amidst the ruins of what had been Milan‡."

Frederic had, however, greatly miscalculated the effect of his severe measures. His Podestàs allowed themselves the greatest abuse of power, and universal indignation soon turned against him those very cities which had hitherto favoured him and even been instrumental in his work of destruction.

Pope Adrian IV. had died in 1159, and his friendship for Frederic had greatly cooled towards the latter part of his career. The Church of Rome was already arrayed against the Emperor, and, at the ensuing Conclave, the majority of electors had raised Alexander III. to the Papacy; whilst only three cardinals attempted a counter-election, by setting up one of their number as Victor IV.

Frederic declared in favour of this candidate of the minority, and thereby enlisted the veritable Pope and a vast number of the clergy in the cause of his foes.

* Sire Raul, De Rebus Gestis Friderici I., Rer. Ital. vi. 1187.

† Von Raumer, Geschichte der Hohenstaufen, i. 141.

‡ Hallam's Middle Ages, i. 236.

Frederic came for the third time into Italy towards the end of 1163. He had no German army with him this time, and relied either on the support of his friends, or on the terror that his late measures had struck into his enemies. He achieved little, however, besides gratifying the Pavese in their rancour against Tortona, whose walls they were allowed to pull down a second time in 1164. He then marched against the towns of the March of Verona, which were already forming a league against him; but the good countenance shown by Verona compelled him to fall back, and even to recross the Alps.

He made a fourth descent in November, 1166, through the Val Camonica to Brescia: none of the Italian cities formerly his allies now joined him. He hurried through Lombardy, and, after wasting six months before Bologna, he advanced in pursuit of his great present object upon Rome.

To Rome, in 1165, Alexander III. had repaired after a long exile in France; and there, backed by the Norman princes of Naples, he had obtained a signal advantage over his schismatic antagonist. Frederic possessed himself of the city, and forced the Pope to make his escape to Benevento; but a pestilence, such as even the Roman malaria had never been known to breed, broke out among his host, and the flower of the German nobility was mown down in a few days. The Emperor made his way back to Tuscany like one pursued by the finger of God, was well-nigh stopped at the crossing of the Apennines of Lunigiana by the

little town of Pontremoli, and, smuggled through with difficulty by the Marquis Obizzo Malaspina, lord of some fiefs in those districts, he came back almost alone to his faithful Pavia, in September, 1167.

Meanwhile the towns of the Veronese March—Verona, Vicenza, Padua, and Treviso,—were leagued against him, since 1164; they had been joined by the more powerful, inaccessible Venice. Five Lombard cities,—Cremona, Bergamo, Brescia, Mantua, and Ferrara,—constituted a similar confederacy at a meeting held at the monastery of Pontida, on the road from Milan to Bergamo, on the 7th of April, 1167, and on the 1st of December of the same year, the two leagues were cast into one, and the allied towns were swelled to fifteen by the adhesion of Milan, Lodi, Piacenza, Parma, Modena, and Bologna.

Frederic put on the best countenance, and threw down his gauntlet to the Leaguers. He was all the time however only thinking of escape; and as the Marquis of Montferrat had obtained for him a safe passage through the states of Humbert III., Count of Savoy, he quitted Pavia by stealth, in March, 1168, with no more than thirty German followers, and with a few Lombard hostages, which he took with him to overawe the cities he had to travel through. In this plight he made his way across Piedmont, and on his arrival at Susa he was so ill-advised as barbarously to put to death one of the hostages, named Zilio di Prando, a nobleman from Brescia. This so aroused the population of that little Alpine town, that, over-

powering the weak body-guard of the Emperor, they broke into his apartments, and would have secured his sacred person but for the devotion and cunning device of one of his Germans (Hartmann von Sieben-eichen), who took the Emperor's place in his bed, and engaged the attention of the populace, whilst the real Frederic, in an undignified disguise, was stealing out of the town.

The cities of the Lombard League had in the mean-time cemented the bonds of their union. They had rebuilt Milan (April 27th, 1167), and compelled Lodi and other towns to join them. Frederic's flight determined now the western cities, Novara, Tortona, Vercelli, and Asti; and even Obizzo Malaspina, with other nobles, ranged themselves beside those burgher confederates. Pavia and the Marquis of Montferrat alone dared still to uphold the Ghibeline standard: and it was in opposition to them, and to screen those places that were more immediately exposed to their attacks, that the Lombards resolved to build a new city, right in the heart of Western Lombardy or modern Piedmont, near the confluence of the Bormida and Tanaro, almost in a line with Asti and Tortona, though at unequal distances between them.

This city they called Alessandria, from the name of the Pope whom they placed at the head of their League. The first stone was laid in 1168 (April 22nd), and although the roofs were only covered with thatch—so that the town was called Alessandria della Paglia;—the place grew so rapidly by the influx of the

devoted Leaguers from all parts of Lombardy, that, before the expiration of that year, it numbered 15,000 inhabitants within its walls*.

Six years now elapsed before exhausted Germany could supply its monarch with a new host: but the war was in the meantime carried on by Christian, Archbishop of Mayence, who however limited his operations to Tuscany, and wasted his forces in repeated attacks upon Ancona, where he was baffled by the heroism of the besieged men, and indeed of the very women.

The Archbishop had been compelled to raise the siege of Ancona, in October, 1174, when, in the same month, Frederic was leading an army into Italy for the fifth and last time.

He took the road of Mont Cenis, perhaps because all other passes of the Alps were now closed against him; perhaps also because he was actuated by base resentment against Susa, and longed to avenge the indignities he had to submit to six years previously.

Susa, at any rate, was given to the flames; and her fate seemed to strike such terror into the towns of Western Lombardy, that Asti opened her gates without even an attempt to resist. Turin, probably obeying the influence of her Bishop, had always declared in favour of the Emperor.

Frederic's progress however was arrested before the mounds of mud and straw which encircled Alessandria. The brave defence made by the new town for four

* Ghilini, Annali d'Alessandria, pp. 2–4.

months, justified the choice of its site by the Leaguers. Not only did it withstand all open onsets, but was also proof against surprise and stratagem; and as the Lombards were now mustering at Modena, and ready to bring relief, the Emperor raised the siege, and marched against them.

A certain awe for the person of their sovereign seemed yet to paralyse the rebels, when they found themselves sword-in-hand in his presence on the open field. They offered to come to terms: by mutual consent both armies were disbanded, and Frederic with his Court was allowed to proceed unmolested to Pavia (April 16th, 1175).

Time was now wasted in bootless negotiation. Meanwhile Barbarossa had ordered a new army to join him from the Grisons; he quitted Pavia unperceived, and at its head once more turned against Milan.

The Milanese had barely time to summon the militia of Piacenza to their aid, and a few choice volunteers from Brescia, Verona, Vercelli, and Novara. With these they met the Germans at Legnano, on the banks of the Olona, in the neighbourhood of Busto Arsizio, fifteen miles from their city. It was on the 29th of May, 1176, on a Saturday. The foreign host was prostrated. The standard and shield of the Emperor fell into the victors' hands; many of the German nobles were taken prisoners; the burghers of Como, who again appeared on the field as Imperialists, were slain to a man. Frederic was thrown from his

horse, and lost sight of by his followers, who brought back to Pavia tidings of his death. His Empress had even put on mourning for him, when, on the third day, he made his appearance, alone, sad, overcome.

German writers* have endeavoured to diminish the lustre even of that poor single Italian victory of Legnano. They have ascribed Frederic's defeat to extraneous causes: to the defection of his cousin Henry the Lion, Duke of Bavaria and Saxony, with whom the Emperor had an interview at Chiavenna, and whose heart he in vain tried to soften even by kneeling as a suppliant at his feet: to his own improvidence in not waiting for the reinforcements of the Pavese, of the Marquis of Montferrat, and of the Archbishop of Mayence: finally, to the sheer chance by which a mere cavalry skirmish of outposts led to a general engagement both parties were alike unprepared for. But it must not be forgotten that the Lombards also had scarcely one-fourth of their troops at Legnano: they did not so far outnumber the Germans, but they had all well-nigh been cut down, when the devotion of the Guard of the Carroccio, and of the "Company of Death" turned the balance in their favour. For the rest the battle was as fair as ever was fought between the two nations. It was only the crowning victory over an enemy who had already been worsted not only in many sieges, but also on the open field in many partial encounters. Of its decisive characters the results give sufficient evidence.

* Von Raumer, Hohenstaufen, ii. 245.

On the 6th of July, of the following year, Frederic agreed to a truce with the Lombard cities, at Venice. In 1183, June 25th, a peace was signed on the same terms at Constance.

By those treaties the Lombard towns obtained a confirmation of all the rights enjoyed by them under "King Henry" (probably the Emperor Henry V.), amounting to absolute self-government, together with most of the prerogatives of sovereign states, amongst them the too fatal privilege of peace and war.

They acknowledged the supremacy of the German monarch nevertheless, though the Imperial dignity was more than ever reduced to the "mere shadow of a great name."

We have purposely, in this rapid sketch of events, abstained from exhibiting the dark side of the only bright picture to be met with in Italian history. It is now the historian's duty to confess that the Italians had hardly ever been of one mind during the strife, and that they went asunder immediately after the victory.

Genoa never joined the patriotic League. That city, like Savona, and Venice and Pisa and the seaports of the south, was in possession of full independence more than a century before any of the inland towns aspired to it. Already free since the very dawn of the eleventh century, all intent upon her maritime conquests in Corsica, Sardinia, and the Balearic Isles, and on her commercial enterprise in the Levant, all eager in her contest with Pisa on that account,

Genoa, like Venice, estranged herself from Italian interests.

She was already so strong, in 1158, that the Emperor Frederic durst not attack her; and she only bowed to him, in 1162, in a moment of terror, after the fall of Milan. It was only by fear that she could be reconciled, and that for a short period too, with her Tuscan rival, Pisa; for the rest, both towns declared in favour of the Emperor, and vied with each other in lending him their aid; improving upon and enlarging their own liberties whilst they abetted Frederic in his attempts against those of their own brethren.

Venice also soon relinquished the League, and once more took up that isolated attitude, which had belonged to her since the Carlovingian æra. Ancona sought her safety in a submission to the Eastern Emperor, and thus called down upon herself the enmity of the Venetians, so that, at the time of her heroic stand against Christian of Mayence, in 1174, the Lion of St. Mark was seen conspiring with the German Eagle for the ruin of an Italian town.

Nor were the inland cities actuated by better feelings. Cremona clung for several years to the Emperor for the mere purpose of wreaking her vengeance on her petty rival, Crema; and, even upon joining the League in 1167,—in the most cordial moments of fraternal goodwill—she stipulated that her prostrate neighbour should never be allowed to rise from her ashes*. Both in the supreme hour of the

* Balbo, Storia d'Italia, p. 153.

struggle and after it, the same city, from the same ungenerous causes, disturbed the harmony of the Union and aroused its suspicions. She was the first to desert the League, and, in contempt of her oath, she made her own peace with the Emperor, in 1176, several months before the truce of Venice was agreed upon.

The Lombards seemed bent upon losing by peace what they had won by war. The instances of defection became daily more frequent. The Pope himself consulted his own and the Church's interest, rather than the common welfare. Tortona, the heroic ally of Milan, twice destroyed by the Imperial, twice rebuilt by the national, party, followed the example of Cremona. Nay more, even Alessandria, the daughter of the Lombard League, deserted its standard. One fair day—it was the 14th of March, 1183,—all the townspeople walked out of its gates, re-entered them at the bidding of an Imperial deputy, who by that ceremony took them under his master's protection, and proclaimed "that Alessandria had ceased to exist, and Cæsarea had risen in its stead*."

Thus, when the final peace of Constance was at last sworn, three months later, the League only numbered seventeen towns faithful to their pledge—Milan, Lodi, Bergamo, Brescia, Mantua, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Treviso, Bologna, Faenza, Modena, Reggio, Parma, and Piacenza—and west of the Ticino, Vercelli and Novara†; whilst seven others, amongst them some

* Ghilini, Annali d'Alessandria, p. 153.

† Muratori, Antiquitat. Italicar. Medii Ævi, iv. 892.

of its former members, and most of them belonging to the western or Piedmontese division—Tortona, Asti, Alba, and Cæsarea—signed on the Emperor's side, as his allies and subjects.

At the same moment however that we deem it necessary, with unsparing severity and with bitter sorrow and humiliation, to expose the errors and crimes of our forefathers even at this, the most brilliant period in their records, we must not fail to point out some of the extenuating circumstances that may be cited in their defence.

Nationality was as yet mere blind instinct. The work of social dissolution was everywhere complete; there was complete isolation for every individual or community. Patriotism was limited by the walls and moats that encompassed a town or castle: freedom was reduced to a kind of wild and rude personal independence. This was the case not in Italy merely, but all the world over; not in the towns only, but in the holds of the feudal nobility.

Yet a necessity for order and unity still lurked under the surface of that sublime disorder. Every fractional unit sought for a head, and that was found in the Empire or in the Church, or in both. There was eternal war between monarch and pontiff, but it was, on either side, always aimed at the person, not the principle. The victorious Emperor had hardly unseated a Pope, when he proceeded to the choice of an anti-pope: the successful Pope had no sooner dethroned a Cæsar, than he intrigued for the election of

another. A world without both a spiritual and a temporal chief was conceived by no man. They only fell out in the definition of their respective powers and attributes.

In the same manner every feudal lord and every free community always looked upon itself as a member of the Great Monarchy. They fought against the Emperor even in the Empire's name. The relations between the Empire and each of its members were matters of endless variety. Each lord had his own feudal compact, each town its own charter. Each one stood up in vindication of its rights and liberties, and strove for their enlargement. Each one had a peculiar purpose, to which any common aim was always subservient. As every one engaged in a quarrel with the chief of the State against conscience and inclination, and merely in pursuit of a definite and individual object, it became almost a necessity and a virtue, to accept the monarch's proffered hand, or to sue for reconciliation, as soon as that object was attained.

With all their hatred of the German soldiery who crushed them, the Italians never deemed themselves authorized to object to the nationality of the alien Emperor. They might have wished the electors' choice to fall on an Italian prince, as in the case of King Arduino; but the new Cæsar, whoever he was, was no sooner crowned and consecrated, than they deemed themselves bound to do homage to him; they acknowledged him, even whilst, upon some matters of local dispute, they deemed themselves entitled to resist

him. The Lombard League, therefore, never aimed at complete independence or nationality. Their object was merely the settlement of their peculiar relations to the Empire. Truly it was almost unlimited local freedom they contended for; but that very freedom was valueless to them, unless, nominally at least, secured by Imperial sanction. Behind its walls every town deemed itself justified in upholding its own by strength of arms; but a general national cause was but imperfectly understood: the League itself had the semblance of conspiracy, and open war with the Emperor was looked upon as little short of sacrilege.

With all their selfishness and jealousy of each other's interests, there is no doubt there was also loyalty at work, to bring about defection and division among those Italian confederates. Every one was in as great a hurry as possible to "return to order," and trusted that his example would not be lost upon his associates.

We need not further dwell on the part taken by Western Lombardy in these general Italian events. The Piedmontese cities were indeed animated by the same spirit as their eastern sisters, but either the bishops within their walls, or the feudal lords in their neighbourhood, were still able to keep them under control. Turin and Ivrea are not up to this time mentioned among the members of the Lombard League. Their bishops still acted in their name. Frederic had found the former city already submissive to its bishop, Charles, when he first marched to the chastisement of Chieri, Asti, and Tortona, in 1155. By his decree of

the 25th of January of that year, the lordly authority of that prelate was extended over twelve miles of the surrounding territory, embracing thus even the little republic of Chieri: all these grants, often confirmed and extended at subsequent epochs, were made at the expense of Humbert III. of Savoy, still the nominal Count and Marquis of Turin.

This saintly prince, wrapt up in his contemplative life at Aulps or Hautecombe, was little more than a passive spectator of the great Lombard struggle. He had, it seems, eagerly beheld the destruction of Milan in 1162*. He was induced by his brother-in-law, William of Montferrat, who held out magnificent promises of "mountains of gold† and the perpetual favour of the Emperor," to allow a free passage to Frederic, at the time of his flight through Susa in 1168. He had a share in all peaceful negotiations, and appended his name to the preliminaries of Piacenza, leading to the Peace of Constance, in 1183. Still his devotion to Holy Church made him lukewarm in the cause of his Imperial master when the latter came into collision with Alexander III. This circumstance, and his remissness in all worldly concerns, made him an easy prey to the Imperial lieutenants, and especially to Henry VI., son of Frederic, and already elected King of the Romans. This latter laid Humbert under the ban of the Empire, in 1188, and took from him his few remaining possessions in Italy, Pianezza, Rivalta,

* Gualvanei, Flammæ, Rer. Italic. xi. 655.

† Muratori, Annali d'Italia, *ad. ann.* 1168.

etc., and finally even the castle of Avigliana, a favourite residence of the Counts of Turin, and their main stronghold at the entrance of the valley of Susa. In the midst of these calamities Humbert III. died (March 4th, 1188).

The Bishop of Turin, however, could hardly hope to secure those rich spoils for himself. Under his protection the city had already established a Consular government, in 1172. The townspeople soon became unmanageable under a mere pastoral staff: they drove their bishop, Arduino of Valperga, from their walls, in 1191, and only readmitted him as a spiritual chief*.

A man of far different temper from Humbert of Savoy was William IV., the elder, Marquis of Montferrat. Closely connected with the House of Swabia by marriage, he was the right-arm of Frederic in all his Italian campaigns; he was the first, last, and only supporter of the Ghibeline standard during the long and frequent absence of the Emperor. He kept Tortona, Asti, and Alessandria in perpetual check: and, even after the battle of Legnano, he had sufficient influence to detach them from the League and bring them back to Imperial allegiance. In Turin, Ivrea, Vercelli, and Novara, the bishops, hard-pressed by their mutinous subjects, sued for the aid of the powerful Marquis, and paid for it with large grants out of their dioceses. It was at this time that the states of Montferrat crossed the Po, and were enriched by lands of Ivrea and Turin—Caselle, Ciriè, etc., and especially

* Pingon, Augusta Taurinorum, p. 33.—Cibrario, Torino, i. 201.

Chivasso, which became in later times the capital of Montferrat, instead of Occimiano, the former residence of its princes.

In the same manner William obtained Trino from Uguccio, Bishop of Vercelli, in 1155. All these grants not only received the imperial sanction of Frederic in 1164, but, in many instances, the confirmation of the cities themselves, at whose expense they had been made, when these gradually emancipated themselves from episcopal thraldom, and began to act for themselves. It was thus that, in 1182, the "men of Vercelli" made a formal cession of Trino and Morano to William and his descendants (August 11)*. In the following year the Marquis had equally come to terms with all the other neighbouring cities, and died at peace with all the world, and in the plenitude of his power, soon after the Treaty of Constance.

At a time in which states were not made up of compact territories, but consisted of a number of scattered lands, castles, towns, and villages, the possessions of William, enumerated in the diploma of Frederic, of 1164, amounted to no less than one hundred and twenty of those separate estates. It is true that imperial and all other grants had in many instances no meaning, or amounted at the utmost to a warrant in behalf of the grantee to possess himself of those towns or territories—if he had the strength to do so; it is true that such grants sometimes conveyed only one-half, one-third, or any fraction of the pro-

* San Giorgio, Cronica, 31.

perty, and of the sovereign rights over it, whilst they acknowledged the claims of other parties to the other portion or portions; but yet the Marquisate of Montferrat had attained as much strength and compactness as ever was allowed to a feudal state, and its Marquis was, without contradiction, the mightiest prince in Northern Italy, the only great feudal lord in a thoroughly republicanized land.

By the side of the Marquis of Montferrat, all his Aleramic cousins, the Marquises del Vasto, del Bocco, etc., continued true to the Imperial cause. Not all of them, however, with equal fortune. The spirit of opposition to feudal tyranny had early developed itself among their subjects. The people of Val di Stura, incensed especially, as it is said, by the enforcement of that most outrageous of lordly privileges which historians designate by the phrase of "primitiæ nuptiarum," combined together for mutual defence. Between 1120 and 1139, that is, about forty years before the rise of Alessandria, they made choice of a beautiful site at the confluence of the Gesso and Stura, and there, in the immediate vicinity of the ancient Roman city of Pedona, and of the famous mediæval abbey of St. Dalmazzo, they built the fortress city of Cuneo*.

Against the new bastions of that formidable "wedge" of Cuneo, the might of Manfred I. and Manfred II.

* Durandi, Antiche Città di Pedona, Caburro, etc. p. 37.—Partenio, I Secoli della Città di Cuneo, p. 7.—St. Simon, Guerre des Alpes, avec l'Histoire de Coni, p. 166

of Saluzzo exerted itself in vain. Beaten back both by those citizens and by the Counts of Provence, who had already, at that early epoch, overstepped the crests of the Col di Tenda and the Col d'Argentiera and penetrated into Italian lands, the Marquises of Saluzzo ventured against even more formidable foes.

Manfred II. waged war against Asti, both during the war of the Lombard League, and even after the peace. It was a losing game for him in the end however, for in 1191 he had to sign a treaty with that town, by the terms of which he acknowledged himself its vassal, accepted Saluzzo itself, besides other towns, as fiefs from the podestà or supreme magistrate, and bound himself to obey the wishes of the citizens, and abide their pleasure in all transactions of war and peace*.

It was thus that the relations between the towns and the nobles were completely reversed. Feudalism went to utter ruin during the ten or twenty years following upon the Peace of Constance. Fully independent within their own walls, the cities claimed supremacy over the rural districts originally belonging to their county or diocese; the few lords who yet resisted their absorption, and refused to dwell within their gates, were subdued one by one, and compelled, as we have seen Saluzzo, to do homage for the very castle of their residence. The cities took all feudal rights, lordly or episcopal, upon themselves; they brought all the minor boroughs and villages under

* Muletti, Saluzzo, ii. 110.

their allegiance. Asti had already, in 1159, no less than forty-seven, between towns and castles, under her rule*. Vercelli, whose bishop had been for many years one of the most powerful lords in Western Lombardy, succeeded to his feudal authority in the same measure as she shook off his yoke; and when she rid herself of his presence altogether, in 1235, she exercised supreme sway, not only over the whole diocese, but also over minor counties, such as St. Agatha or Santhià, which had long since formed its appendages†.

The Counts of Biandrate were amongst those who suffered most from those convulsions.

Vercelli and Novara had profited by the disasters of Frederic I. in 1168. They had taken the town of Biandrate in 1170, and compelled its feudal lords to descend to the rank of their citizens. War broke out again and again, and most of the seven-and-thirty castles possessed by the House of Biandrate in the diocese of Novara alone, were stormed by those enterprising burghers. At last, in 1194, March 12th, the magistrates of Vercelli and Novara came to the understanding that the walls and habitations of Biandrate (the town) should never be suffered to rise again, and that there should never be peace between either city and the Counts who bore that name‡. The Biandrate fell back upon Val d'Ossola and Val Sesia,

* Grassi, Storia d'Asti, i. 106.

† Cibrario, Studi Storici, i. 175.

‡ Monument. Historiæ Patriæ, Chartarum, i. 1013.

and for two centuries continued to be troublesome neighbours to those republics: one of their branches established itself at San Giorgio in Canavese, and held, for even a longer period, a very conspicuous rank in that province; others crossed the Alps, and settled in Valais.

Even in the mountain regions of the Upper Novarese, an untoward incident contributed to break their power.

That hardly more outrageous than absurd feudal right, whatever its barbarous name might be, which conferred on the lord the temporary possession of the bride of his vassal (a right so utterly contrary to all dictates of nature, to all principles of Christian morality, that we would willingly put it down among the myths of the Middle Ages, if slave-life in America did not practically exhibit something akin to it at the present day)—that right was never insisted upon in Italy without leading to some tragic catastrophe. The exaction of that monstrous tribute, as we have seen, gave rise to the free town of Cuneo, in the early part of the twelfth century. In some remote districts of other provinces the custom subsisted for a longer period, but it had become purely nominal, a pretext for pecuniary extortions, since no instance occurred in which the meanest boor would not purchase, at the highest rate, the intemerate honour of his bride. One of the Counts of Biandrate had come to some agreement of this nature; but, upon catching a glimpse of the person for whom he had unwittingly

accepted compensation, he was so smitten with her charms, that he endeavoured, both by fraud and violence, to break through the terms of his engagement. He was foiled by the superior cunning of the peasant bridegroom, and met his death by the hand of the latter; but even that was not deemed a sufficient punishment. The peasantry rose throughout the province; (it was in 1308, the very year of the emancipation of Switzerland.) The castles of the Biandrate fell one after another, and the whole of that branch of the family was exterminated*.

We are aware of no later mention of that feudal privilege, either in Piedmont or other parts of Italy; for so long as that country preserved even the shadow of independence, there was no nation in Europe in which honour was more the attribute of all classes; in which the very peasantry had more nobly vindicated the holiness of their homes. In France, at Bourges in Berry, we meet with instances of that singular right being claimed as late as 1560, and the claim, oddly enough, was preferred by the parish priest of the place ("rector seu curatus prætendebat, ex consuetudine, primam habere carnalem sponsæ cognitionem†.")

Still, however scattered and discomfited, feudalism was not altogether annihilated in Piedmont, as it so nearly was in Eastern Lombardy.

Montferrat still stood firm, and around it those

* Morbio, Storia di Novara, Municipii Italiani, v. 103.

† Krone, Dolcino und die Patarener, p. 132.

minor potentates of Saluzzo, Biandrate, etc., were always able to cluster. The towns were hindered in their growth, and, instead of turning all their forces to mutual destruction, they were often called upon to combine against a common, ever-present enemy. There was, indeed, no lack of wars between Turin and Asti, Asti and Alessandria, etc. etc. Still the enmity between those towns was never so intense, their hostilities were never carried to such extremes, never prolonged to such a degree, as those which distracted Milan and Pavia, Parma and Piacenza, etc.

The real quarrel in Piedmont was between the cities and the lords, between town and country,—an important fact, the consequences of which are discernible at the present day; for if the Piedmontese population exhibited less of that high daring which gave so wide a scope to the ambition of the Lombard and Tuscan republics, it also evinced less of that jealousy which led to mutual extermination, or enslavement, and left its poison rankling in the hearts of their citizens even long after the extinction of that mad, suicidal freedom. Asti, Turin, Alessandria, etc. were not allowed freely to indulge in their incipient animosities. Their common enemy, Savoy, Montferrat, or Anjou, was ever at hand, crushing evil passions no less than soaring aspirations, compelling them to mutual support, to combination and alliance. Liberty seldom reached its full development, it is true; but neither did that great bane of Italian freedom, municipal hatred, strike such deep root in Piedmontese hearts.

The want of large centres of population seemed at all times to be felt in those rural districts of Piedmont. The same necessity which led to the foundation of Cuneo and Alessandria, equally gave rise to Mondovì, in the course of the same century. In the following age the people of the valley of the Belbo, trodden by the wars between Alessandria, Asti, and Montferrat, were compelled to congregate around the strong castle of Nizza, or Nice, of Montferrat,—a place which, from its improvised construction and from the thatch on its roofs, took the name of "Nizza della Paglia" (A.D. 1235). It is true, those civil wars destroyed towns as often as they called them into being, but new habitations invariably arose on the ruins of the old ones. Testona, for instance, had no sooner fallen under the attacks of Chieri and Asti, in 1228, than the Milanese sheltered its houseless inhabitants in the immediate neighbourhood, and laid the first stone of the town and castle of Moncalieri, in 1230.

CHAPTER III.

RISE OF PIEDMONT.

WILLIAM IV. of Montferrat had, at his death, soon after the Peace of Constance, laid the basis of the power of his House.

He left, however, rather too large a progeny behind him; and his gallant sons, all intent upon avoiding disputes at home about their forefathers' inheritance, evinced too eager a spirit to look for their fortunes abroad. Few houses in Italy plunged more deeply into the illusions of the Crusades than that of Montferrat. William IV. himself was one of the most renowned heroes of the second of those Eastern expeditions, that undertaken by Louis VII. of France and Conrad III. of Germany, and the same, indeed, in which, as we have seen, Amadeus III. of Savoy lost his life (1148).

Four of the sons of William IV. of Montferrat, William called Longsword, Rainer, Conrad, and Boniface, all went to the East in quest of glory, and all were rewarded with power and rank.

The first of them, William, married Sibyl, sister of Baldwin IV., King of Jerusalem; and as Baldwin, a leper, was by his infirmities removed from public cares, William governed the kingdom in his stead. He died however about one year after his marriage, and his posthumous son, Baldwin V., an infant, was consecrated and crowned in 1183. William's widow however had in the meantime married Guy of Lusignan, and this latter not only governed Palestine during the lifetime of the leprous Baldwin IV. and of the infant Baldwin V., but after the death of both of these, in 1185, he aspired to the crown of Jerusalem, in his wife's name.

In the meanwhile the fortunes of the Christians in the East were at a very low ebb.

Saladin overran Syria, took Jerusalem in 1187, and besieged Tyre, the last bulwark of the Christians, which he soon reduced to extremity. In all these vicissitudes Lusignan showed utter want of ability, and deserved the contempt of his subjects.

Rainer and Conrad of Montferrat, brothers of William, had long before this crisis risen to high destinies at Constantinople.

The former had married Mary, daughter of the Emperor Manuel Comnenus, and had been raised to a kingdom in Thessaly. He died however in 1183, leaving no issue. In the same year, or soon afterwards, Conrad, the bravest of all these Montferrat princes, who had already won high renown in the Italian wars, now in his turn sailed for the East,

and was driven by storms to the Bosphorus. The Eastern Court was the theatre of almost yearly revolutions. Isaac Angelus was now in possession of the throne, but had to contend with rivals and rebels, against whom Conrad lent him the timely aid of his good sword.

The hand of Isaac's sister, Theodora, and the highest rank at court, were the reward of his prowess; but soon weary of his Grecian princess, or of a greatness which doomed him to inaction, Conrad sailed with a Greek armament to Syria, and appeared before Tyre in the sorest hour of need.

His presence restored the courage of the Christians. Saladin was compelled to raise the siege of Tyre: the Crusaders took the offensive, and the war was brought to the walls of Acre, of which Conrad began the siege in August, 1189.

The Queen of Jerusalem, Sibyl, died, with four of her daughters, during that memorable siege: and Lusignan, to whose incapacity or treachery the Christians were fain to lay all their disasters, had, with his wife, lost all title to the crown; the heiress of Jerusalem was now Isabel, Sibyl's sister. This princess had, at a very early age, and against her inclination, married Humfried of Thoron, a gentleman of Touraine, son of the constable of Jerusalem, a puny weakling, whom she treated with utter contempt.

Conrad, whose ambition equalled his high talents and spirit, now stepped forward as a candidate for the crown of Palestine. A council of prelates dissolved the marriage of Isabel; and Conrad, now probably a

widower, but whom his enemies charged with having left one wife in Italy and another in Greece, married the divorced princess, not only with her most eager consent, but with the universal applause of the Christians, who at last beheld the sceptre placed in the ablest hands.

All this in 1190. In the meantime the fall of Jerusalem and the distress of the Christians had urged the great European powers to a third Crusade. Frederic I. Barbarossa had marched to the East, and found his death in the cold waters of the Salef, in 1189. His second son, Frederic of Swabia, had led the remnants of the German host to Acre, where he also fell, in 1191. In the month of June of the same year, Philip II. of France, and Richard I. of England, landed there with more efficient forces, and the town yielded at last to the efforts of so many nations, on the 12th of July.

The contention for the crown of Jerusalem which had long been pending between Conrad of Montferrat and Guy of Lusignan, now arrayed the whole Christian camp into hostile factions.

France, Genoa, the whole Christian population, and the free Knights of the Cross, were all in favour of Conrad, who had too plainly been the soul of the Christian host in its drooping fortunes. Venice and Pisa, however, from natural jealousies, and Richard of England, perhaps from motives of personal envy, declared for Lusignan; and the great preponderance of the English monarch carried the day in favour of his minion.

The crown was adjudged to Lusignan, with reversion to Conrad, in the contingency of Lusignan's death. Conrad, justly wounded by this decision, abandoned the camp, and withdrew to his own well-earned principality of Tyre.

But in the meanwhile Philip Augustus had quitted Palestine, August, 1191, and Richard, compelled by the disorders of his kingdom, began also to turn his thoughts homeward (April, 1192).

He seemed now to acknowledge the merits of Conrad of Montferrat, and yielding to the unanimous will of the whole Christian nobility, he sent messengers (April 9th),—amongst whom was Henry II., Count of Champagne,—tendering to Conrad the crown of Jerusalem, and the supreme command which the English king was on the point of resigning.

Conrad was overjoyed at this announcement; he made ready to start for the camp, and on the last day of his stay in Tyre (April 28th) he accepted an invitation to dine with the Bishop of Beauvais, at a house of the latter outside the city gates.

On his return, in the evening, he was fallen upon by two of the assassins of the Old Man of the Mountain, and fell under their daggers close to the toll-bar of the town. One of the murderers was cut down on the spot: the other, under the infliction of torture (it is said—but by French and German writers), pointed to the Lion-hearted King himself as the instigator of the deed.

Only eight days after the murder (May 5th, 1192),

Isabel, the disconsolate widow, was, by the command of Richard, with indecent haste, and notwithstanding her great repugnance, married to that same Henry of Champagne who had been the bearer of Richard's message to Conrad,—apparently lest the germ of Conrad, at the time teeming in her bosom, should be so born, as to afford the House of Montferrat claims to the throne of Jerusalem. This throne was now awarded to Henry of Champagne; and to Guy of Lusignan, by way of compensation, was given the kingdom of Cyprus*.

Boniface III., another of the sons of William IV. of Montferrat, came also very young to the East, and, with most of the Christian princes, was taken prisoner at the fatal battle of Hittin, or Tiberias, in 1187. The Sultan, it is said, brought him to Tyre, and attempted to shake the firmness of Conrad, the defender of that town, by threatening to put his prisoner to death, unless the place surrendered; but the firm demeanour of both brothers, at that trying moment, won the admiration of that chivalrous Mussulman, and Boniface was set free without ransom.

Boniface sailed back to Italy after the taking of Acre, and succeeded his father and brothers in Montferrat (for the order of succession amongst these sons of William IV. is matter of bare conjecture); but, when a fourth crusade was assembled at Venice, in 1201, he sold or pawned his possessions, and almost ruined his House for ever, in his anxiety to bring all his forces to the aid of the cause of the Cross.

* Mackintosh, England, i. 186.—Von Raumer, Hohenstaufen, ii. 490.

He joined Baldwin of Flanders and "brave old Dandolo" in that expedition, which, against his own wishes and those of all Christendom, was turned against the Eastern Empire. He was foremost at the storming of Constantinople in 1203, and again in 1204; nor was it only in valour and in earnest Christian zeal that he presented a striking contrast to his worldly-minded companions in arms; he also won the respect and enthusiasm of the down-trodden Greeks, who flew to him for protection against the outrages of an unbridled soldiery in the hour of conquest, and called him the "holy marquis," because he was the only one not deaf to the voice of humanity in the midst of the horrors which stained the Latin victory.

When the Empire of the East lay powerless in the crusaders' hands, and these proceeded to share its spoils, it seems that the jealousy of the Venetians alone prevented Boniface from ascending the throne of Constantinople. His connection with the Genoese, and the proximity of his Italian estates to the territory of that republic, rendered the Marquis of Montferrat obnoxious to his Venetian allies, and their choice fell upon Baldwin of Flanders.

Boniface however received the lands beyond the Bosphorus, and the island of Crete or Candia, for his own portion. The island he sold to the Venetians, and the rest of his own share he exchanged for that kingdom of Thessaly which had been his brother Rainer's before him.

He was further engaged in those Eastern wars till 1207, when he fell by a poisoned arrow, at the siege of Salatia, as he was fighting against the Sultan of Iconium.

William, his son, the sixth of his name (according to the genealogists, who reckon William Longsword among the reigning marquises), succeeded Boniface III. in Montferrat, whilst another son of this latter, named Demetrius, inherited the throne of Thessaly.

William VI. had again and again to exhaust all the means of his Italian states to uphold his brother's throne against a variety of Greek, Latin, and Mahometan adversaries. Demetrius came back in 1218, and laid his Eastern diadem on the high altar of the cathedral of Alba; but William was resolved on one more effort to assert the rights of his House, and perished in the attempt, probably by poison administered to him in a glass of cold water at Salonich, the capital of his Eastern dominions, in 1225.

Thus had the House of Montferrat, notwithstanding the splendour of its achievements, gained as little by the wars in the East as its rival of Savoy. Only, if the tradition may be relied on, the people of Piedmont and of all Lombardy had to thank Boniface III. of Montferrat for a precious seed imported by him from the Levant,—that of the maize, or Indian corn, called in Italy Turkish corn, or "melica," which throve admirably on our plains, and became then, and is now, the staple food of the rural population throughout the country; whereas the subjects of Sa-

voy, in the opinion of one of its historians*, never gained anything from those chivalrous wars of the Cross except leprosy and the plague, which became a frequent visitor to their country, as appears still from the great number of leper- and lazar-houses erected everywhere, especially in the valley of the Rhone, in Savoy, and Aosta.

Warned by the tragic fate of William VI., his successor, Boniface IV. of Montferrat, called the "Giant;" and William VII., styled "the Great," seemed less eager for such laurels as might be reaped in the East, and turned their attention to matters nearer home.

These exploits of the Montferrat princes in the East are somewhat more than episodical to the history of Piedmont. They changed the whole tenour of its destinies; they favoured the development of popular life in the towns, and allowed breathing-time to Savoy.

We have seen that, in the long contest between feudalism and democracy, Montferrat for a long time took the lead on the lordly side.

Boniface III., son of William the elder, returned from the Holy Land in 1191, and restored the ascendancy of his family, which the absence of nearly all its princes for the last eight years had greatly diminished.

Frederic I. had died of his cold bath in the Salef, in the previous year, and his worthless son, Henry VI., reigned in his stead. His father had, by a fortunate

* Costa de Beauregard, Maison Royale de Savoie, i. 99.

marriage, helped him to the throne of Naples and Sicily; and William, son of Boniface III. of Montferrat, had valiantly fought by the new Emperor's side in his conquest of his southern kingdoms. The Marquis had therefore high claims to the gratitude of Henry VI., and he was generous enough to use his influence in behalf of Savoy.

Humbert III. had died, in the odour of sanctity, in 1188, and his young heir, Thomas I., had been left to the guardianship of Boniface III. of Montferrat. The first step of the latter was to obtain a release of Savoy from the Imperial ban, under which it had lain since 1188. Its young prince, thus rehabilitated, took up arms against Asti, now rendered insolent by her victories against Saluzzo, and drove back her militia and that of her allies, in 1192. The war between the cities and the lords nevertheless continued, with various vicissitudes, till the end of the century; when the great leader of the feudal party, Boniface III. of Montferrat, anxious for his second expedition to the East (that which resulted in the conquest of Constantinople), brought about a compromise with those republican adversaries, with but little regard to the interests of his house or party. His son William VI. also sailed for the East, on his father's death, in 1207, and again ruined himself in 1225, for another of those Eastern campaigns, from which he never returned.

Thomas I. of Savoy, after having been thus set up in his helpless youth by his cousins of Montferrat, was not thrown upon his own resources until he

was fully able to shift for himself; and the princes of Montferrat, when at last they sat down permanently on their fathers' seat, found a formidable competitor in that house of Savoy which they had saved from utter ruin.

We have seen, in our account of the progress of Savoy north and west of the Alps, how Thomas I. laid the basis of the real greatness of his House in Burgundy; he equally rebuilt its shattered fortunes in Lombardy: and it is well to observe that it was under this Thomas's reign, that the possessions of this House on either side of the mountains began to be designated by the respective appellations of Savoy and Piedmont*.

Restored to imperial favour under Henry VI., Thomas I. equally secured the goodwill of all the monarchs who followed on the German throne, and the Ghibeline character of the House was henceforth pretty permanently established.

Henry VI. died in 1197, leaving a son aged four years, heir to the throne of the two Sicilies, under the guardianship of Pope Innocent III., the same young prince who was afterwards the Emperor Frederic II.

The German electors, however, could not place a mere child on the throne, and the choice of a new sovereign renewed the ancient feuds of that country. The Ghibelines set up Philip of Swabia, another son of Frederic I.; and the Guelphs opposed to him Otho IV. of the House of Saxony and Bavaria, son of

* Durandi, Antico Piemonte Traspadano, p. 102.—Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, i. 282.

Henry the Lion. Philip, successful in 1206, fell by the hand of an assassin at Bamberg, in 1208. Otho, now without a competitor, came into Italy in 1209, and was crowned at Rome. Pope Innocent however, soon dissatisfied with him, produced his ward, Frederic II., as a candidate for the German Empire. Otho IV., recalled to Germany by hostile factions, involved in the contests of French and English, beaten by the former at Bovines in 1214, found himself forsaken by his own party, and died in obscurity in 1218.

Frederic II., master of Germany, Naples, and Sicily, soon became too formidable to Innocent's successor, Honorius III., whom he encompassed on all sides. The Pope enlisted the Lombard cities on his side, and renewed the Lombard league in 1226. The Lombards, however, no longer fought for their liberties, against which, truly, Frederic made no attempt. It was merely a revival of the old war-cry of Church and State, a recommencement of the old contests between the Empire and the Papacy. Faithful to her old Guelphic predilections, or rather to her old enmity to the House of Swabia, Milan, at the head of half the cities of Northern Italy, waged an unrelenting war against Frederic; but Pavia, with nearly as many towns, took the opposite side, and a hundred private interests were mixed up with the general quarrel.

Of the Piedmontese towns, Vercelli and Alessandria (now no longer Cæsarea) generally took part with Milan, and Turin herself for the first time appeared as a member of the Guelphic league; whilst Chieri and

Asti, together with the Marchional houses of Montferrat and Saluzzo, took the field under Imperial colours.

Thomas I. of Savoy met the King Philip at Basle, in 1207, and obtained from him, besides a grant of Moudon in the Pays de Vaud, also the towns of Chieri and Testona in Lombardy.

These imperial bounties had however no real meaning. Chieri and Testona, both dependencies on the diocese of Turin, now governed themselves as free communities, and Thomas was not likely to be acknowledged as their liege, notwithstanding the fair name he enjoyed of friend to popular liberties—a reputation he had won by the liberal charters he had bestowed upon Susa in 1198, and Aosta even at an earlier period,—and a reputation which had induced the people of Pinerolo to transfer to him the allegiance which they owed to their lord, the Abbot of St. Mary, near their town (1212).

After the fall of Philip, Thomas I. had been on equally good terms with Otho IV., and joined him at Ferrara, in 1210, whence he accompanied the Emperor to Turin. Faithful to that Guelph monarch, in 1215, and allied to Milan and Vercelli, Thomas carried the war into the territories of the Ghibeline Marquises of Montferrat and Saluzzo: and even destroyed St. Evasio, the capital, in later times, of Montferrat*.

He then turned all his might against Saluzzo. Manfred II., the reigning marquis, died in the same year, 1215, and his widow, Alasia, daughter of Wil-

* Galvan. Flamm. Munipal. Florum, Rer. Ital. xi. 666.

liam IV. the elder, of Montferrat, could but feebly carry on the war in behalf of her grandson, Manfred III.; she therefore came to terms, and Saluzzo was made for the first time to do homage to Savoy* (December 30th, 1216).

The war between the two houses was, however, renewed by the young marquis, Manfred III., in 1222, when the latter allied himself with Turin, bought a house in that town, took rank as a burgher, and aided the people in their hostility against the representative of their former princes. But Manfred was again worsted in the field, again compelled to acknowledge himself a vassal of Savoy; and this time, Thomas I., bent upon cementing the alliance between his own family and that of its rivals, betrothed the two young daughters of Amadeus his eldest son (afterwards Amadeus IV.)—Beatrice to Manfred III. of Saluzzo, and Margaret to Boniface IV., the Giant, of Montferrat (March 4th, 1223)*.

The extreme youth of both these princes, and the obedience to which Thomas I. had equally reduced the Marquis of Busca and other nobles, gave him the foremost rank among the lords of Western Lombardy; and Frederic II., aware of the storm that gathered against him in the north of Italy, could place no better prince at the head of his own party. He therefore bestowed upon Thomas I. the dignity of Imperial Vicar over all Lombardy and the March of Treviso, 1226.

* Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, i. 258.

† Muletti, Saluzzo, ii. 241.—Cibrario, Savoia, i. 274.

The cities of Albenga and Savona, which had withdrawn themselves from the sovereignty of Genoa, immediately placed themselves under his protection, and he sent his son Amadeus to govern them.

Thomas nevertheless had hitherto been on the best terms with Genoa, a city always staunch to the Imperial party, in behalf of which Thomas had, in 1225, sent one hundred and twenty "Burgundian," that is, Savoyard, lances, at a time that Genoa and Asti, as Ghibelines, waged war against Vercelli and Alessandria, Guelphs.

Whilst however the authority of Thomas I. was acknowledged in those southern provinces, and even Marseilles, in her differences with the Emperor, sued for his mediation, Turin and the towns in its district showed the utmost jealousy of his power, and sought everywhere allies against him.

We have seen at an early time, 1212, Pinerolo come into his hands by a spontaneous dedition: and her devotion was, in 1220, rewarded by a free charter. The first use the town made of its liberties was to declare war against the lord of its choice. In 1228 we find Pinerolo leagued with Turin, Testona, and Andrew, Dauphin of Vienne, against the Count of Savoy.

The Viennese Dauphin, like the Count of Provence, had overstepped the uppermost crest of the Alps, and possessed the valleys of Oulx and Perosa.

One of the great objects of contention amongst these Piedmontese towns was the line to be followed by the traffic between Lombardy and France, as most

towns had the right of levying tolls on the high-road; and it was therefore of the utmost importance that merchants and merchandise should be made to pass through them.

Asti and Chieri, Ghibelines, and allies of Savoy, had to pass through the territory of Turin; and the latter, with the help of her auxiliaries, wished to compel them to follow the road of Testona and Pinerolo, which led them up to the valley of the Chiusone and the Mont Genèvre, across the territory of Dauphiny; whereas Asti and Chieri insisted that the traffic from Turin should proceed to Susa and the lands of Savoy.

The alliance between the Dauphin and Turin, Testona, and Pinerolo, was signed on the 13th of July, 1228. In the same year Chieri and Asti, to whose injury that league had been formed, took their arms against Testona, stormed and levelled it with the ground*. Milan and her Guelph confederates now came forward with a great host; they laid waste the territories of Montferrat, Asti, and Saluzzo; they built Moncalieri on the ruins of Testona, in 1230, and, following up their success, they entered the lands of Savoy. But they met here with a signal defeat, in which their leader, Uberto da Osino, was slain†. Milan returned to the charge, with another army, in 1231, under another chief, Ardighetto Marcellino; he ravaged Montferrat and laid siege to Chivasso, but he also met his death under the walls of that town, whereupon the Milanese withdrew.

* Cibrario, Chieri, i. 111. † Galvan. Flammæ, Rer. Ital. xi. 671.

All these wars are told with great confusion by the chroniclers of Savoy, and rest on no very positive authority*.

It is not easy to state to what extent Thomas I. was engaged in the contest, and whether indeed he was present in Italy at the time. But in the following year he seems actually to have taken the offensive against his rebel subjects. He gained possession of Moncalieri by force of arms, and undertook the siege of Turin itself, when he was seized by mortal illness, and compelled to fall back upon Moncalieri.

There, according to the best accounts (for these particulars are matter of discussion†), he died in January, 1233, and was buried at the Abbey of St. Michael della Chiusa.

Amadeus IV., the eldest of the nine sons of Thomas I., and his successor, was the most indolent of the family, and slack to follow up his father's schemes in Piedmont. He made over, as we have seen, those Italian possessions to his brother, Thomas II., Count of Flanders, in 1235. By virtue of sovereign power over his vassal-brother, and by his influence over the Marquises of Saluzzo and Montferrat, both his sons-in-law, he thought he had sufficiently guaranteed the interests of his house south of the Alps; and anxious to turn his attention to Savoy, he came to a compromise with Turin and Pinerolo, on the 18th of November of the same year, 1235: he renounced Collegno, Rivoli, and

* Chroniques de Savoie, Mon. Hist. Patriæ, i. 139, 603.

† Guichenon, Maison de Savoie, i. 252.

other places which had long been subjects of dispute between the princes of his house and the Bishop or city of Turin, and reserved for himself little more than Avigliana, and the rights of supremacy over the rural or castled nobility of those Piedmontese districts.

Thomas II. was a bolder and more needy man than his brother, well calculated to better his position wherever his lot was cast. But his ambition was at first turned into a different channel by his marriage with the heiress of Flanders, and his success in the French and English courts. In 1244 he was a widower, and returned to his estates in Piedmont.

The province of Savoy in Piedmont was at this epoch limited by the Alps, the Po, and the Sangone, a river springing from the mountains above Giaveno, and "from Avigliana downwards:" with all the liberalities of Amadeus IV. it amounted to little better than a feudal supremacy over a few rural nobles and villages.

Thomas II. had, as Count of Flanders, and again on his return to Italy, connected himself with the Papal party, and enjoyed the favour of Innocent IV. But Frederick II., aware of his high qualities, and hoping to find in him a stronger support than in Amadeus, did all in his power to detach Thomas from the Guelph interest, and win him over to his cause.

He appointed him his Vicar in Lombardy, first as far as the Ticino and Pavia, then as far as the Lambro at Monza. He then gave him Turin together with its bridge, Moncalieri, and various other castles on the Turin hills, of great importance to the trade of those

times; likewise the Castle of Lanzo, in the centre of the valleys of that name, and finally Ivrea and the Canavese*.

All this between 1246 and 1249, the last years of Frederic.

This emperor, at war with the Popes Honorius III., Gregory IX., and Innocent IV., and with the whole Guelph league, especially with Milan, had given the Lombards a great defeat at Cortenuova, in 1237. He had been compelled to fall back from Brescia, in 1238; but was still strong enough to overrun Lombardy and Piedmont, where he reduced many of the weaker towns to his obedience.

Gregory IX. launched a bull of excommunication against him in 1239: he preached a crusade against him in 1240; but died of sorrow in 1241, on receiving tidings of the naval battle of Meloria, where the Genoese Guelphs were overpowered by the Ghibelines of Pisa.

The Roman See was vacant for two years, for Celestine IV. only survived his election eighteen days; and Frederic, during this interval, gained so great an ascendancy over Italy, that the new pontiff, Innocent IV., was compelled to take refuge, first at Genoa, his native city, then at Lyons, in France.

Here however, at the head of a council, he plied the Vatican thunders with so much effect, that many of the Ghibeline supporters of Frederic fell off from him. The Emperor, now bowed down with adversity,

* Cibrario, Savoia, ii. 49.

disheartened by rebellions in the two Sicilies and by the supposed treachery of Peter de Vineis, his chancellor, who strangled himself in his prison at this very time (1246), was at last fairly overcome; and bent upon a reconciliation, he offered to accompany St. Louis in the Crusade that King meditated against Egypt. With this view he sued for an interview with Innocent, and had already reached Turin, on his way to Lyons, when he was summoned back by the news of an insurrection at Parma, which had placed that city in the hands of his Guelph enemies (June 16th, 1247). He hastened back to punish the rebels: the whole strength of the two hostile parties was put forth in the contest. Frederic lay before the city, and converted his camp into a town, which he named "Victoria," and which he intended should flourish instead of the besieged one, doomed to destruction. But the besieged people beat up his quarters, scattered his army, and burnt the rival city to the ground (February 18th, 1248).

On the following year Heinsius, one of his natural sons, King of Sardinia, was routed in a campal encounter at Fossalta by the Guelphs at Bologna. He fell into the hands of the victors, and his captivity ended only with his life, at the end of twenty years.

Thoroughly worn out by adversity, and in vain soliciting the Pope's forgiveness, Frederic retired to southern Italy, where he died on the 13th of December, 1250, at Ferentino, in the province of Capitanata.

From the death of Frederic II. Italy was for sixty years free from the presence of an Emperor. Conrad,

son of Frederic and King of Germany, occupied Naples from 1251 to 1254. After his death Manfred, his brother, held that southern kingdom till 1266. The Popes however, determined upon the extermination of the House of Swabia, offered the crown of the Two Sicilies successively to two English princes, and finally with better effect to the brother of St. Louis of France, Charles of Anjou, Count of Provence. This latter achieved the conquest of southern Italy, by his victory over Manfred at Benevento (February 26, 1266); and was equally successful against Conradin, son of Conrad, who, with the relics of the Ghibeline party, came forward to the vindication of his birthright, but was routed and taken at Tagliacozzo (August 23, 1268), and put to death, in cold blood, at Naples, on the 26th of October of the same year.

The fall of these last of the Swabians, and the long absence from Italy of their successors on the German throne, gave an undue weight to the Guelph party all over the country. A crusade against Ezzelino da Romano freed the cities of the March of Verona from the tyranny of that terrible chieftain in 1259; and the Guelphs of Tuscany, successful in 1251, then worsted in 1260, obtained at last a decisive and permanent advantage in 1268, owing to the influence of the omnipotent Charles of Anjou.

Thomas II. of Flanders, and his brother Amadeus IV., chose therefore no very favourable opportunity to declare in favour of Frederic II. in 1246; and the liberalities of that Emperor in behalf of Thomas were

of little value. He had however the fortune to enjoy the good opinion of Frederic's implacable enemy, Pope Innocent IV. Restored to the favour of that pontiff immediately after the Emperor's death, absolved from excommunication, he allied himself to the family of the Pope by his marriage with Beatrice de' Fieschi, niece of Innocent IV. and sister of Adrian V., in 1251. The Pope obtained now from the newly-elected King of the Romans, William of Holland, a new grant of the towns and castles so freely lavished upon Thomas by Frederic II., so that the Count of Flanders in 1252, though still unable to secure Moncalieri, Ivrea and its territory in his hands, succeeded at last in gaining possession of Turin*.

Amadeus IV. died in 1253, and his son Boniface was placed under the guardianship of Thomas, who thus brought all the power of the House of Savoy into his hands. He was equally a guardian of Thomas, son of Manfred III. of Saluzzo, and of William VII., son of Boniface IV. the Giant, of Montferrat, and had therefore, as Thomas I. had had before him, all the feudal might of Piedmont in his grasp.

Elated by all this accession of power, he declared war against the people of Asti, on the subject of the possession of Moncalieri, and wrested that place from them in 1255.

The Astesans however, now at the height of their power and prosperity, took the field against him; and although Thomas was backed by the towns of Chieri

* Monument. Histor. Patriæ Chartar. i. 1409.

and Alessandria, they regained possession of Moncalieri in December of the same year.

Thomas gave them battle at Monte Bruno*.

He had with him probably no other troops than the militia of Turin, who followed his standard with reluctance, and forsook him in the hour of need.

That city had become intolerant of all lordly sway, and had even, years before, in open defiance of ecclesiastical censures, resisted the instalment of the bishop, John Arboreo, appointed to their See by the Pope. The combined favour of Pope and Emperor had compelled the Turinese to acknowledge Thomas as their lord; but they had jealously bargained for the maintenance of their popular government, and they had perhaps only watched for the first opportunity to desert him on the battle-field. On his return, after the disaster of Monte Bruno, the whole town rose against him; the very women threatened to cut him in pieces: he was thrown into a dungeon of Porta Susina, with an understanding that he should never be set at liberty until the ransom of the prisoners taken at Monte Bruno was paid in full†.

The brothers of Thomas, Peter II. the conqueror of Vaud, Philip Archbishop of Lyons, and even Boniface Archbishop of Canterbury, marched with an army across the Alps, and carried the war to the gates of Turin.

* Alfieri e Ventura, Chronic. Astens. Rer. Italic. xi. 142, 174, 189.

† Cibrario, Torino, p. 244.—Matth. Paris, *ad ann.* 1256.

This city however had by this time made its peace with Asti; and the combined forces of the cities met the host of Savoy on the banks of the Sangone, when, owing to a sudden panic, as it would seem, the Transalpine troops were dispersed, and the rebel cities conquered without fighting.

Those princes of Savoy had, however, the means of combating the Italian republicans with other weapons than the sword.

At their instigation, their relatives of England and France threw into their prisons all the merchants of Turin and Asti, who were trading in great numbers at Lyons, Paris, and London, and stripped them to the last ducat. This measure wounded those commercial republics in their most vital part, and could not fail to bring them to terms.

The negotiations lasted for several months.

Thomas had to renounce all his rights upon Turin, Collegno, Montosolo, and Cavoretto, and to do homage to Asti for Moncalieri. He had to give two of his sons, Thomas III. and Amadeus V., as hostages, and to deliver up to the people of Asti Carmagnola and Revel, with other places belonging, not to himself, but to his ward, Thomas of Saluzzo.

With all these securities, his captors were still loth to restore him to liberty. The Turinese pretended to have fulfilled their own share of the compact by sending him from their own prisons to those of Asti: in these latter the unhappy prince was retained until the end of June, 1257.

Released at last, soon after that epoch, Thomas had the greatest difficulty in bringing his brothers, Peter and Philip, to accede to the conditions which necessity had dictated. His sons, the Abbot of Susa (a great favourite of Thomas, who had been made a prisoner by the Astesans at the taking of Moncalieri), with numerous other hostages, were still in the hands of the Astesans; and Thomas, bent on renewing the war, and feeling that his main strength lay in the King of England and Richard of Cornwall, King of the Romans, undertook a journey to London, whither he had himself conveyed in a litter in the spring of 1258. He came back with large subsidies in money in the following year, but only reached the Val d'Aosta, where he sank under the weight of sorrow and infirmity, and expired on the 1st of February, 1259. He was buried in the Cathedral of Aosta.

The chroniclers of Savoy* have idle tales about the exploits of the young Count of Savoy, Boniface, son of Amadeus IV., whom they call the "Little Roland:" that he came down with an army to avenge his uncle and guardian's fate in 1263; that he laid siege to Turin, but fell a captive into the hands of the citizens, and was cast into a dungeon, where sorrow ended his days; further, that Peter II., his uncle, on his accession to the throne after the death of Boniface, also marched across the Alps, and actually obtained possession of Turin.

Of the deeds of Boniface, however, no clear records

* Chroniques de Savoie, Mon. Histor. Patr. Script. i. 157, 161.

are left; and as for Peter II. and Philip I., whose reigns come down to the year 1285, it seems very evident that, entirely taken up with the affairs of Vaud and Helvetia, they seldom, if ever, bestowed a thought on their Piedmontese possessions.

Their neglect of the interests of Savoy in Italy could not fail to lead to the advance of the rival Houses of Montferrat and Saluzzo.

Indeed the supremacy of one of these lordly families could only be established when the others were "under a cloud." There was a perpetual alternation in their destinies. The Aleramides only rose after the decline of the power of Savoy or of Turin, on the death of the Countess Adelaide: they reached their highest prosperity under William IV. of Montferrat, when Humbert III. of Savoy condemned himself to a life of seclusion: they vanished from the stage of Italian politics at the time of their Eastern exploits, to make room, as it were, for the first steps of Thomas I. of Savoy; and they now recovered their ascendancy after the disasters of Thomas II., and owing to the prolonged absence of Peter II. and Philip I., and their indifference to Piedmontese matters.

The two Houses (of Montferrat and Saluzzo) had already been enriched by the dowry which Thomas I. allowed to his granddaughters, when he married them to Boniface IV. of Montferrat, and Manfred III. of Saluzzo. The sons of those two marquises, William VII. and Thomas I., were both very young at the time of the captivity of Thomas II. of Savoy, and had both

been under his guardianship. After his death, they further enlarged their dominions at the expense of Savoy; and it is indeed probable that Peter II. and Philip I., eager for their Transalpine conquests, viewed with a favourable eye the success of these lordlings, who alone could now uphold the cause of feudal power against the rampant democracy of the cities.

Certainly Savoy never was so near utter estrangement from Piedmont as during this period, otherwise so glorious to the annals of its House.

William VII. of Montferrat early developed abilities which entitled him to the appellation of "The Great Marquis." In 1257 he had married Isabel, daughter of Richard, Earl of Gloucester, who had brought him a dowry of four thousand marks in silver. He now extended his dominions in Canavese; and several of the cities adjoining his dominions, such as Acqui, Nizza della Paglia, and even Alessandria, put themselves under his protection.

Great events had in the meantime occurred in Lombardy and throughout Italy.

Soon after the peace of Constance the cities had shown weariness of their stormy freedom. They had almost universally abolished the consular government, for which they had so stoutly combated Barbarossa, and substituted the government of one man—the "Podestà," or supreme magistrate; taking, as it were, a hint from the enemy they had just prostrated, and by whom such officers had been first appointed.

The consular government had generally been mixed,

as the consuls were chosen in equal numbers from the noble and plebeian ranks. But the podestà was almost invariably a nobleman, a stranger to the town, and generally chosen from those rural lords who had maintained a sort of wild independence in their own castles.

Besides the podestà,—a mere chief justice,—the cities also elected a leader of their forces in war; and this "Capitan del popolo," allowed to exercise almost dictatorial sway in great emergencies, held all the municipal authorities under control. The captain of the militia soon became a despot; and although his dignity, like that of the podestà, was only temporary, and indeed limited to six or twelve months, although both were subjected to the greatest constraint, and even indignity*, and called to the very strictest account of their deeds at the expiration of their office, yet it was often in the power of the military ruler, who held the sword in his hand, to retain his command with or without the consent of those who had bestowed it; so that, instead of the "Signoria," or municipal magistracy, the people often obeyed a "Signore," or lord, who summed up in his own person all the powers of the state.

This lordly dignity was conferred either upon a nobleman within the walls themselves of the city, or in its territory; but those jealous republics more generally gave preference to a stranger, and it thus came to pass that the same chief often obtained the lord-

* Krone, Podestà und Statutenwesen, in 'Dolcino und die Patarener,' p. 97.

ship over several cities, and governed them by means of vicars, or lieutenants, or by magistrates appointed by his influence.

On these terms William VII. of Montferrat was chosen Lord by the city of Alessandria in 1260.

By this time, however, another great potentate had gained a footing in Lombardy and Piedmont.

Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis of France, had married Beatrice, the fourth of the daughter-queens of Raimond Bérenger, last Count of Provence, in 1245. He had inherited Provence from his father-in-law, in 1259; and that county by this time extended over Nice, as well as some parts of the valley of the Stura.

He made his appearance as head of the Guelph party at a time when the Popes, in opposition to Frederic II. and his sons, had given that party the preponderance all over Italy. The Guelph chieftain had found devoted partisans in most of the free cities and in the Marquises of Saluzzo. Cuneo, Mondovì, Cherasco, and Alba, free towns up to this moment, readily submitted to his sceptre; and Thomas I. of Saluzzo, with the Marquises of Busca, Del Carretto, etc., did homage to him for their estates. Most of the Guelph cities, Turin, in 1262, and even Milan, equally acknowledged his supremacy; and William VII. of Montferrat, who also at this time deemed it expedient to join the triumphant Guelph party, made his own terms with Anjou.

Charles was now called to higher destinies in South-

ern Italy. He sailed for Rome, accompanied, we are told, by Louis of Savoy, afterwards Baron of Vaud*. Toward the end of the summer of the same year, 1265, his wife Beatrice of Provence, and Robert of Bethune, his son-in-law, led into Piedmont that army which was to subject Naples to him.

William of Montferrat laid Piedmont open for its passage. Napoleon della Torre, the head of the Milanese Guelphs, conveyed it safely through Lombardy†.

The conquest of Naples was achieved in 1266, and when Conradin marched to the south, in 1268, William of Montferrat still headed the Guelphs, who endeavoured, though in vain, to oppose the progress of that unfortunate young prince.

But Conradin fell, and the ascendancy of Anjou became unbearable as soon as it was unlimited. A reaction was now inevitable. The Ghibelines rallied all over Lombardy, and joined in one mighty effort against Anjou.

William of Montferrat became the very soul of the Ghibelines.

He had, in 1271, married Beatrix, daughter of Alphonso X. "the Wise," King of Castile, one of the many pretenders to the Imperial crown, who had been hailed "King of the Romans." By him William was appointed Imperial Vicar, and found himself at the head of that party which still acknowledged the mere phantom of Imperial majesty.

* Denina, Storia dell' Italia Occidentale, i. 223.

† Sismondi, Républiques Italiennes, ii. 196.

In 1274, Thomas I. of Saluzzo also joined the League, which then came to open hostilities with Anjou.

In the month of June they gave battle to Philip, Seneschal or Governor for King Charles in Piedmont, at Roccavione, in Val di Gesso, and completely defeated him*. The towns of Alba, Cherasco, Mondovì, Cuneo, and Savigliano, eagerly shook off the yoke of Anjou, and placed themselves under the protection of Montferrat and Saluzzo.

Two powerful families had in the meantime been contending for supremacy at Milan,—the Della Torre and Visconti. The former, at the head of the Guelph or popular party, had risen to power during the wars of the Lombard League against Frederic II., and, from 1265 to 1276, they had driven the Archbishop, John Visconti, and his Ghibeline kinsmen and partisans, into exile. But the Archbishop gained a signal victory over his rival, Napoleon della Torre, at Desio, on the 21st of January, 1277, took him prisoner, and re-established the ascendancy of his family and party.

In this contest William of Montferrat, at the head of the Ghibeline League of Piedmont, had repeatedly come to the aid of the Visconti. The Archbishop, unable to keep for himself the lordship of Milan, to which the enthusiasm of the people had, on his first success, raised him, caused the Marquis, his powerful ally, to be appointed lord for five years (1278, August 16). Turin, Vercelli, Novara, indeed all Western Lombardy, were already in subjection to William.

* Muletti, Saluzzo, ii. 395.

The Marquis, however, had by this time exhausted his treasury, and at the very moment in which he had secured the sovereignty of Northern Italy, he was compelled to make a journey to Castile, to solicit fresh supplies from the King his father-in-law.

On his way through the diocese of Valence he was suddenly fallen upon by Thomas III. of Savoy, who carried him, a captive, to the stronghold of Pierre-Châtel in Bugey.

Two of the sons of Thomas II., Thomas III. and Amadeus V., given up, as we have seen, as hostages, at the time of their father's captivity at Asti, in 1257, had been released especially by the exertion of the powerful family of Fieschi, their maternal relatives.

In 1272 they were already in possession of Pinerolo, and of that limited district between the Po and the Sangone, which had constituted the Piedmont of Thomas II., their father*.

By this daring *coup-de-main* of Valence, in 1280, Thomas III. suddenly improved his position. His prisoner, anxious to proceed to Castile, purchased his freedom by a cession of Turin, together with its all-important bridge and the fort at the end of it,—together also with Collegno, Grugliasco, and other towns, which were now considered as fiefs pertaining to the city of Turin.

This matter was settled on the 21st of June, 1280, and William of Montferrat, restored to liberty, was generous enough not to protest against compulsion,

* Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, ii. 168.

and allowed Thomas to obtain possession of what he claimed as the heritage of his forefathers*.

Thus did Turin permanently come into the possession of Savoy.

Having by such questionable means re-asserted the rights of his house over part of its Piedmontese possessions, Thomas III. was now patiently waiting for the decease of his old and infirm uncle, Count Philip, which should place all the other dominions of Savoy into his hands, when he was himself carried off, in 1282. Count Philip also died in 1285, and Thomas's brother, Amadeus V., the Great, succeeded as Count of Savoy; and ruled also over Piedmont, till 1294, when he ceded that province, "from Rivoli downwards," as a fief to Philip, eldest son of Thomas III.

By this time William VII. of Montferrat had come to the end of his career.

Released by Thomas III. of Savoy, the Great Marquis had achieved his Castilian journey and brought back large sums, which were to aid him in the furtherance of his ambitious schemes.

But already the tide had turned.

Otho Visconti had no longer occasion for his services. He had already laid the basis of the power of his family at Milan, and enabled his nephew, Matthew, to reduce many towns of Lombardy to subjection. In December, 1282, the Archbishop roused the city against Montferrat, and drove from it John of Poggio, the lieutenant of the Marquis.

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 75.

Melchiorre, Bishop of Tortona, following the example of the Milanese Primate, put himself at the head of a similar rebellion in that town in 1284. But William was beforehand in this instance: he chastised the city, and, as some chroniclers inform us*, struck off the head of the treacherous prelate on the scaffold.

By this severe measure William VII. managed for awhile to keep Piedmont under his control. In Lombardy he allied himself with the Della Torre, by a strange combination joining the Guelphs east of the Ticino, while he still headed the Ghibelines west of that river. He thus obtained possession of Como and Pavia. Besieged by the Milanese in the latter town, he was yet strong enough to beat them back; he pursued them into their own territory, and obtained decisive advantages over them, when he was stopped by tidings of treason in his rear.

The people of Asti, still one of the most stirring and thriving communities in Northern Italy, had never been thoroughly subdued by the Marquis. In 1287 that city had already leagued itself with Genoa, Milan, Cremona, Piacenza, and Brescia, to put an end to the tyranny of Montferrat. They called Amadeus V., Count of Savoy, to the head of their alliance. Allured by a very high stipend, that prince came, as a mere soldier of fortune, across the Alps, leading twelve hundred men-at-arms, and a multitude of crossbowmen

* Chronic. Astens. Rer. Italic. xi. 166.—Gualvan. Flamm. Rer. Ital. xi. 709.—Irici Tridinens. Rer. Patr. p. 101.

and other infantry, with which he laid waste the lands of Montferrat*.

Attacked by these enemies in the rear, William VII. marched repeatedly against them, even whilst he yet showed a good countenance in Lombardy: nor is it very certain that mere force of arms would have prevailed against him, had not the gold of the bankers of Asti sown seeds of rebellion at Alessandria, the very town which had been so long devoted to his interests.

The Marquis hurried thither, almost alone, trusting his presence would suffice to quell the revolt. But the populace, who had sold him for thirty-five thousand gold florins, laid hold of his person, threw him into a narrow dungeon (some say an iron cage, or a wooden one lined with iron), and there left him to fret his great soul to death, from the 8th of September, 1290, to the 6th or 13th of February, 1292.

So great was the terror with which, even dead, he inspired his craven captors, that, when he breathed no more, they opened his veins, and poured molten lead down his throat, to guard against any chance of his resurrection†.

Dante, who was a very young man at this period, could not forbear a mournful allusion to

> "That brave Marquis, for whose cause
> The deed of Alessandria and his war
> Makes Montferrat and Canavese weep‡."

* Chronic Parmens. Rer. Italic. ix. 819.

† Chronic. Astens. Rer. Ital. xi. 168.

‡ Cary's Dante, Purgat. vii. 136.

His son John, only fifteen years old, was brought up at the Courts of Saluzzo, Dauphiny, and Naples.

Novara, Vercelli, and other cities came under the dominion of Matthew Visconti, who, during the advanced age of the Archbishop his uncle, governed Milan, and rose to great power in Lombardy. The same Matthew also took possession of Casale, and all the estates of Montferrat; and the young Marquis, unable to cope with so formidable an antagonist, was fain to allow Visconti to govern his Marquisate, under the specious title of Lieutenant.

An agreement to that effect was drawn up in May, 1293*.

But the days of the Visconti had not yet arrived, and John of Montferrat was yet enabled to come by his own.

In 1296, Thomas I. of Saluzzo died, and was succeeded by his son Manfred IV., who had been the friend of Montferrat's youth. The Guelphs and Ghibelines were now at war in Asti, as indeed in every Italian city. The two young Marquises took part with the Ghibelines, and, having restored them to their country, obtained from them the restitution of that share of the spoils of Montferrat which, at the fall of William the Great, had fallen to the lot of the Astesans.

Presently the Guelphs of all Lombardy broke out against Matthew Visconti. John and Manfred, who were Ghibelines in Piedmont, never scrupled to join

* Leo, Italienische Staaten, iii. 554.

the Guelphs of Pavia, Vercelli, Novara, etc., who aided the Della Torre against their ancient adversary. Visconti was driven from Milan in 1302, and John of Montferrat recovered the whole of his father's heritage, and was hailed perpetual Lord of Casale.

He did not, however, long enjoy his success. He died, January, 1305, and the regret of his subjects, as the chroniclers assure us*, was so vehement that they tore to pieces, and, like very cannibals, even roasted and ate the mangled limbs of Master Emanuel, his physician, whom they suspected of foul play with his patient.

John left no children of his wife, Margaret of Savoy, sister of Amadeus V.; and he bequeathed his Marquisate to his own sister Yolande, wife of the Emperor Andronicus the Elder, of Constantinople, and to her second son, Theodore Palæologus.

The latter became the head of the second dynasty of Montferrat.

But Manfred IV. of Saluzzo, whom John had appointed his executor, took possession of a great part of Montferrat, which he claimed either as a recompense for his great exertions in behalf of John himself, or by some right of reversion grounded on the common Alcramic origin of the two houses.

Meanwhile Theodore Palæologus landed at Genoa, in 1306; and, as a preliminary step in vindication of his rights, he married Argentina, daughter of Obizzino Spinola, the chief of one of the great Genoese houses,

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 84.

who, besides countless wealth, possessed extensive fiefs north of the Apennines, at Serravalle, near Novi, in the valley of the Scrivia.

Manfred of Saluzzo, for his own part, sought allies in another quarter; he married a lady of the Doria, the rival family to the Spinola.

He solicited likewise the aid of Savoy, and on the 27th of August, 1305, he did homage to Amadeus V. for both marquisates.

Theodore however had found another auxiliary in Charles II. of Anjou, King of Naples, who, warring against Manfred of Saluzzo, regained possession of Val di Stura, of Cuneo, Fossano, etc., lost by his father since the battle of Roccavione, in 1274.

Manfred, hard-pressed by the King, came to terms with him, and relinquished in his favour his claims on Montferrat, withdrawing altogether from the contest (February 7th, 1306).*

Philip of Savoy, nephew of Amadeus V. and first Prince of Achaia, had by this time re-appeared on the field. He had come to take possession of his Piedmontese fiefs on the 1st of February, 1295; but he had quitted them, in 1301, in pursuit of his golden schemes in the East, and had come back in 1304 with little more than his empty titles of Prince of Achaia and Morea.

He found on his arrival that the Guelphs of Asti had regained possession of their city, driving from it the partisans of Montferrat and Saluzzo. That revo-

* Muletti, Saluzzo, iii. 74.

lution had been aided by Philip's lieutenant at Turin, and Philip had therefore no difficulty in passing himself off as a friend of Guelph liberties, and had himself appointed Capitan del Popolo (another name for absolute lord) both of Asti and Chieri, for three years.

Just at this contingency John of Montferrat died, and the war for his succession commenced. Philip, a man of rare craft and suppleness, hesitated for some time between the two pretenders, then decided in favour of Saluzzo; when the latter was worsted, Philip also made his terms with Charles II. of Anjou, offered to give up to him his Grecian principalities, and contrived thus to enlarge his estates at the expense of Theodore of Montferrat: at the same time, abusing the overweening favour of the Guelphs of Chieri and Asti, he also stripped those cities of not a few of their possessions.

Theodore, however, with the aid of some of the Lombard cities, and by lavish supplies of Genoese gold, held his ground with honour. Casale was devoted to him; Chieri and Asti, weary of the grasping tyranny of Philip of Achaia, withdrew from his allegiance, and most of the lands of Montferrat, south of the Po, were restored to their lawful lord. But the possessions of Montferrat between the two Doras—that is, in Lower Canavese—came into the hands of Savoy; and the success of the latter house would have been far more considerable, but for the frequent dissensions of Amadeus V. with Philip of Achaia, his

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nephew, and the endless shifts and subterfuges and downright treacheries of the latter.

Meanwhile an unusual phenomenon, the appearance of a German emperor, came to complicate the already entangled web of Italian politics.

Rudolph of Habsburg and Albert of Austria had passed away, and their influence had hardly been felt in Italy for good or evil. But Henry VII. of Luxemburg seemed to be tempted by the glitter of the golden and iron crowns, and resolved upon crossing the Alps almost immediately upon his accession.

He was met at Soleure by Amadeus V., his brother-in-law, who hence accompanied him through Bern, Lausanne, and Geneva, to Chambéry, and across Mont Cenis to Susa and Turin (October 10th, 1310).

From the height of the mountains, it is said*, Amadeus V. pointed out to him the southern land lying at their feet, and besought the Cæsar to take pity on its distracted state, and heal the wounds of its discords.

Henry was a man of upright mind and generous intentions: he went to work in good earnest. In Asti he pacified the Solari with the Isnardi di Castello; at Vercelli, the Avogadro and Tizzoni; at Novara, the Tornielli and Brusati; and the respective chiefs of the Guelphs and Ghibelines in every town; finally, at Milan, the Della Torre and Visconti, recalling the latter from banishment.

After his coronation at Milan, January 6th, 1311, he proceeded to Genoa, where he effected a similar re-

* Guichenon, Royale Maison de Savoie, i. 359.

conciliation between Doria and Spinola, Fiesco and Grimaldi. Here also he at last settled the disputes between Montferrat and Saluzzo*.

His subsequent career in the south is not material to us. Repulsed by the Florentine Guelphs, who were upheld in their insolence by Robert of Anjou, the Emperor resolved upon marching against that king at Naples, but on his way thither he died, probably poisoned by a monk with a consecrated host, at Buonconvento, near Siena, August 24th, 1313.

He had hardly left Lombardy, on his way to his coronation in the Vatican, when wars broke out fiercer than ever in his rear. The only permanent result of the Emperor's progress through Northern Italy was the final annihilation of the Della Torre at Milan, and the firm establishment of the colossal power of Matthew Visconti and his family.

His presence, however, had produced a lull in the storm of angry passions in Piedmont.

All parties, princes, cities, had laid themselves at his feet, except the towns of Alba, Cuneo, Fossano, and Alessandria, who, staunch in their devotion to Robert of Anjou, King of Naples, and to the Guelph party, had refused to do obeisance to the Emperor during his two months' stay in Asti.

Amadeus V., who, with his brother Louis of Vaud, and his nephew Philip of Achaia, had followed the Emperor east and south, and been present at his coronation at Milan and Rome, was appointed his Imperial

* Muletti, Saluzzo, iii. 94.

Vicar, and invested with the lordship of Asti, Ivrea, and the Canavese.

Asti could not easily be induced to submit, and indeed soon afterwards (1314) she gave herself to Robert of Anjou. But Ivrea and a great part of her territory readily acknowledged their ruler.

CHAPTER IV.

PROGRESS OF PIEDMONT.

THERE were thus, at the epoch of Henry VIII.'s death, in 1313, three lordly potentates of nearly equal power in Piedmont—the Prince of Achaia, and the Marquises of Montferrat and Saluzzo.

The former held, besides Turin, seventeen minor towns and villages, and nearly as many noble families, under his sway. Each of the others had perhaps twice as many castles and manors, but this mere territorial advantage was counterbalanced by the importance of Turin, and its situation on the high-road to France. Notwithstanding the comparatively quiet behaviour of that town, and the character for order and submission which it has borne in all ages, there was yet more republican spirit within its walls than the harsh despotic temper of its master could brook, so that Philip of Achaia had taken up his residence at Pinerolo.

In the same manner Theodore of Montferrat still tarried at Chivasso, though the States of the Marquisate met at Casale; and Manfred of Saluzzo also

preferred his castle at Revel to the small but growing capital from which he took his marchional title.

But, beside these three local sovereigns, there were three other powers, foreign to Piedmont, yet all of them either actually in possession of some parts of the country, or laying claim to them.

On the west, the Count of Savoy was master of Aosta, of the valley of Susa as far as Rivoli, of large estates in the valleys of Lanzo, and, by recent acquisition, of Ivrea and the Canavese, the government of which he shared with the Prince of Achaia, and for parts of which he had frequent contentions with Montferrat.

On the south, the House of Anjou had retaken its position in Val di Stura, at Cuneo, Mondovì, and Alba.

On the eastern side the Visconti had a footing at Novara, Vercelli, and Tortona.

These towns, on the borders of modern Piedmont, no less than the more central ones of Alessandria, Asti, and Chieri, governed themselves municipally; but their factions rendered the iron rod of a lord indispensable, and their boasted freedom amounted to little more than the faculty of choosing their own master, whenever sheer force did not impose one upon them.

The relations of the three minor powers between themselves, and their dependence on their three great patrons, gave rise to a perpetual complication of interests, and rendered their policy extremely tortuous and changeable.

The closest ties ought indeed to have existed between the Counts of Savoy and their cousins of Achaia, for to the family connection a most indisputable bond of allegiance was added, and their union was fraught with great mutual advantages.

At a time when its hands were full of business elsewhere, the House of Savoy had cast forth its Piedmontese branch, as a forlorn hope, in that great turmoil of Italian contention. The Princes of Achaia, though in no instance destitute of that valour which distinguished the Savoy race, yet excelled by other gifts more in keeping with their peculiar position.

They had all the instincts of Italian princes.

Like their rivals of Montferrat and Saluzzo, they had, as it were, wilfully lost caste. They had departed from the uprightness, loyalty, and magnanimity, which high descent and traditional power should have imparted to them; they had abdicated those knightly feelings, in which feudalism, with all its faults, nurtured its nobles, and stooped to the low cunning of mere upstarts and usurpers. They met the Visconti and other Lombard tyrants on their own field, fought them with their own weapons; they too soon adopted that maxim which Italy is charged with having spread in the civilized world, that "wherever the lion's hide will not stretch, it should be eked out with patches from the fox's skin."

The allegiance of Achaia to Savoy was at no time very firm, nor its affection very cordial.

The children of Thomas III. and their descendants

to the third generation, could never forgive the injustice by which Amadeus V. set up the younger branch to the exclusion of the elder. Again and again they rose in rebellion, if not with a hope to make good their title to Savoy itself, at least with a view to withdraw Piedmont from its subjection.

Yet they were, in the main, true to their House. Its enemies seldom found support amongst them; the quarrels they had with their cousins they fought single-handed, and, in great emergencies, all animosities were set aside, and domestic feuds made up or adjourned.

On the other hand, the Counts of Savoy never allowed these Piedmontese kinsmen to be trodden down utterly. In several instances, it is true, they were compelled to disown them, for their deeds were often very questionable, and their quarrels too plainly of their own seeking; but when they saw them at bay, when they heard a real cry of distress, they seemed to feel that "blood is not water," or at least they were aware that the cause of both houses was one, that every blow aimed at Achaia equally told against Savoy.

As nature had from the beginning predetermined the dependence of Piedmont, or Achaia, on Savoy, so mere geographical position often threw Montferrat on the alliance of Milan. The Marquises of the House of Palæologus sustained themselves with independent pride for two or three generations; but the fortunes of Visconti prevailed in the end, and Montferrat, driven at last to a choice between Savoy and Milan,

too readily gave preference to the latter. Saluzzo, for analogous reasons, was drawn into close ties, now with Anjou, now with Dauphiny, till it fell into the toils of France, when this latter monarchy had annexed both the Provençal and Viennese inheritance.

Happily for Savoy, however, those rival Houses of Montferrat and Saluzzo laboured each under its own peculiar organic disease, which neutralized their forces, or turned them to distant, unprofitable purposes.

Saluzzo was perpetually divided against itself.

Founded by a prince, Boniface of Savona, whose seven sons could be content with nothing short of seven Marquisates, the main heritage of this House was repeatedly split into new estates, to make up appanages for its younger branches; new partitions occurred again and again at most critical moments, when the House could only uphold itself by its united energies—and gave rise to family feuds which afforded its neighbours frequent opportunities for interference, and laid it completely at their mercy.

Montferrat, which had, at its greatest ascendancy; in the twelfth century, enfeebled itself by its Eastern enterprises, but had regained its lost ground under William the Great, was again prostrated after the death of his son John, owing to a disputed succession. For, even in this merely fortuitous circumstance, Savoy had at this juncture, and ever afterwards, the advantage over her neighbours. The mere fact of the robust and healthy vitality of the reigning House, secured to the country an unbroken inheritance, and

guaranteed its independence in times in which all rights but those of sovereign princes were too readily set aside.

Savoy never died off. No vacancy of the throne ever afforded unconscientious neighbours a pretext for flagrant interference in her affairs; and she was, providentially as it were, able to escape the fate which extinguished Dauphiny and Geneva, which all but prostrated Montferrat in 1305, and in later epochs put an end to the separate existence both of that Marquisate and of Saluzzo, as well as of Milan, Mantua, and all other Italian states.

The first attempts against the peace of Western Lombardy, and against that kind of clumsy balance of power established among its princes by Henry VII. in 1311, were made by Robert of Anjou.

This restless and ambitious monarch had, in 1309, succeeded his father, Charles II., in Provence and Naples, whilst his eldest brother, Charles Martel, was called to the throne of Hungary. Anxious to regain the ascendancy enjoyed by his ancestor Charles I., as head of the Guelphs in Northern Italy, Robert had taken up a strong position in Cuneo, Mondovì, Alba and Fossano, and Asti had, in 1314, submitted to his power, in sheer defiance of the Imperial decree which had allotted it to Savoy. The Princes of Savoy and Montferrat now joined hands against Robert, and even drew Manfred IV. of Saluzzo into their league.

But the war soon became general: the two great leaders—Anjou of the Guelphs, Visconti of the Ghibe-

lines—stood forth conspicuous, and the city of Genoa became the main theatre of their exploits.

The Ghibelines of that republic, following the example of the inland towns, had looked around them for a lord, and offered the sovereignty of their city to Henry VII. Soon after that Emperor's death, a civil war broke out between the two great factions, whom the well-meaning Henry had vainly hoped to reconcile.

The Ghibelines were driven from Genoa in 1317. Matthew Visconti of Milan, and Cane della Scala of Verona, brought them back with a large Lombard host, and besieged the city, in 1318.

King Robert threw himself into the beleaguered place, and was hailed its lord. He forced the besiegers back (February 5, 1319), but was called away into Provence, and the Ghibelines came once more to the assault. The war was thus prolonged for more than four years in the very suburbs of the city; it continued all along the Riviera between the rival families of both factions, until a strong government was established by the election of the first Doge, Simon Boccanegra, on the 23rd of September, 1339.

Meanwhile, everywhere except at Genoa, the fortune of Visconti prevailed.

Matthew drove, one after another, all the Guelph leaders and Papal lieutenants off the field,—the Cardinal Bertrand du Pojet, Philip of Valois, afterwards King of France, and Raymond of Cardona; and, at his abdication and death in 1322, he bequeathed little less than the sovereignty of all Lombardy to his numerous progeny.

His sons, Galeazzo I., Luchino, John Archbishop of Milan, Stephen, and Marco, either rose to some share in the sovereignty, or, as in the case of the last-named, by their military exploits contributed to the lustre of his family.

After them the government fell to Azzo, son of Galeazzo I., and to Matthew II., Galeazzo II., and Bernabò, sons of Stephen. For the greater part of the fourteenth century the influence of these princes weighed heavily upon Piedmont, and it was with difficulty that either the three native princes, Achaia, Montferrat, and Saluzzo, or even Savoy and Anjou, could make head against it.

The peace of these western districts, at no time very sincere or steady, was presently disturbed by domestic dissensions in Saluzzo.

Manfred IV., the reigning Marquis, a widower and father of a son, Frederic, had, in an advanced age and from political motives, married a lady of the House of Doria, by name Isabel, in 1307. This latter gave birth to several children, among them two sons, Manfred and Theodore.

The old Marquis was prevailed upon by his young imperious wife to bequeath the Marquisate to her eldest son, Manfred, putting off the lawful heir, Frederic, with but a slender appanage (1323)*.

Frederic rose in arms against his father, and a civil war raged thus in that little state for several years.

The clamours of those domestic feuds were hushed

* Muletti, Saluzzo, vol. iii. p. 145.

up by the mediation of Aymon the Peaceful, Count of Savoy, in 1334. The succession of Saluzzo was secured to Frederic, and Manfred had to be satisfied with some lands which gave him the title of Lord of Cardè.

Frederic, however, had hardly received the homage of his future subjects, when he died, in 1336, and his rights passed over to his son Thomas II. The old Marquis, Manfred IV., survived Frederic till 1340, and on his demise Thomas II. occupied the throne of Saluzzo.

In all these wars of Saluzzo Philip of Achaia had taken a prominent part. A restless, faithless, grasping prince, Philip had been for many years contending with Theodore of Montferrat for some lands in lower Canavese, and continually aspiring to the lordship of Chieri and Asti. He now proffered his mediation in the affairs of Saluzzo, took part now with the father against the son, now with the latter against the former, and so adroitly advanced his own interests, that while Frederic did him homage for Revel, Carmagnola, and Racconigi, in 1324, he kept on good terms with the other party, and in 1328 gave his daughter Eleanor in marriage to the young pretender, Manfred.

All these intrigues, and his attacks upon Asti and Montferrat, roused at last a formidable storm against him.

A league was formed to his ruin between Frederic of Saluzzo, Theodore of Montferrat, the city of Asti, and the Seneschal of Robert of Anjou (1333).

Philip could now hardly rely on the aid of Savoy, for Amadeus V. had died in 1323: he had been succeeded by Edward till 1329, and Aymon was now reigning, who had enough to do to hold his own against his enemies of Dauphiny.

Even alone against all odds, or only relying on the support of the city of Chieri and a party of the nobles of Canavese, Philip of Achaia took the field with his wonted spirit, and inflicted on his enemies a signal defeat at Tegerone, a castle near Poirino, halfway between Turin and Asti (October 7, 1333)*.

He now pursued his advantage against Montferrat, took one after another the towns still belonging to Theodore in Canavese, and laid siege to San Giorgio, the principal of those places, when his enemies, unable to overcome him in the field, now plotted against him in his own city of Turin.

Frederic of Saluzzo had come to a secret understanding with some Ghibeline partisans, at the head of whom was a priest, John Zucca, Provost of the Cathedral. These again and again endeavoured to introduce the troops of Saluzzo within their walls; but Philip was always on his guard, and the result of these attempts was fatal to the traitors, several of whom lost their heads on the scaffold (September 3, 1334)†.

Only a few days later (September 25), Philip closed his career at Pinerolo.

James, his eldest son and heir, was yet a minor,

* Datta, Principi d'Acaia, i. 105. † Cibrario, Torino, i. 277.

under the guardianship of Catherine of Vienne, his mother. This lady, anxious to screen her son from the vengeance of his father's enemies, obtained a suspension of hostilities with Montferrat and Saluzzo, then concluded a peace with the Seneschal of Robert of Anjou (July, 1331).

Piedmont was thus allowed a few years' breathing. But Manfred IV. of Saluzzo died (1340), and his grandson Thomas II. had hardly ascended the throne when his uncle, Manfred of Cardè, once more set up those pretensions which he had but reluctantly abandoned in 1334. Hence new civil war in Saluzzo, new general war throughout Piedmont.

In these fresh hostilities, James of Achaia, now of age, and allied with Robert of Anjou, sided with the Pretender. They took Saluzzo by storm; they besieged Thomas II. in its castle, compelled him to surrender, by threatening the most cruel atrocities against his inoffensive subjects, and doomed him to thirteen months' hard captivity.

They released him at last, yielding to the remonstrances of the Marquis of Montferrat; but still drove him from land to land, up to the wildest solitudes of the valley of the Vraita, whence Thomas crossed the Alps and sought refuge at the Court of the Viennese Dauphin; and, with the hope of interesting that prince in his cause, did homage to him for his marquisate, October 31st, 1343*.

This Dauphin was Humbert II., the last prince of

* Muletti, Saluzzo, iii. 298.

the last dynasty of that state; the same who, in 1349, sold Dauphiny to the grandson of Philip of Valois.

That mere act of despair of Thomas II. had therefore the most serious consequences for Piedmont and Italy, as Saluzzo became thus a French fief, and the House of Valois acquired over an Italian principality claims which it well knew how to press forward in after times.

In the meanwhile a whole generation of Piedmontese princes had passed away, and their young heirs reigned in their stead.

Theodore of Montferrat had died in 1341, and was succeeded by his son, John II.

The throne of Savoy was vacated by Aymon in 1343, and occupied by his son, the Green Count, a minor.

On the 10th of January of the same year, Robert of Anjou also died; Naples, Provence, and what the House of Anjou designated as its "County of Piedmont," were inherited by his too famous daughter, Joan I.

The age and sex of this princess, the disorders of the court, her quarrels with her cousin and husband, Andrew, son of Charles Martel, King of Hungary, afforded the enemies of Anjou a good opportunity to free the lands of Piedmont from the influence of the Provençals.

In proportion as the fortunes of Anjou declined, the ascendancy of Visconti prevailed.

The lords of Milan had possession of Vercelli, No-

vara, and Bobbio, and John II. of Montferrat, devoted to their interests, had also brought Alessandria and Asti under their subjection. At the head of a Milanese army, John II. now warred against the lieutenants of Anjou, and wrested Alba from them.

Queen Joan sent her Seneschal, Réforce d'Agoult, with copious reinforcements to the rescue of that town, and, especially with the help of Chieri, allied with Anjou, Alba was reconquered.

But now the hostile parties came to a general engagement for the possession of Gamenario, a castle in the territory of Chieri, which terminated in the total defeat of the Seneschal (April 23rd, 1345)*.

Only a few months later (September 18th) the catastrophe of the assassination of Andrew, husband of Joan, occurred at Naples; and report pointed to the Queen as the author or instigator of the deed. A cry of horror was raised against her, especially amongst her Piedmontese subjects, and the power of Anjou in those provinces was rapidly verging to its downfall.

But now the time had come for Savoy to recover that ascendancy which, owing to her estrangement from Italy, she had lost during the reigns of Edward and Aymon, and still more during the minority of Amadeus VI.

James of Achaia had been unfortunate enough to declare in favour of the losing party, in favour of Anjou. He was now dismayed at the advance of Mont-

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 139.

ferrat and Visconti into the dominions of Queen Joan, and, unable to resist their combined efforts, he solicited the aid of Savoy.

He had friends in the Council of Regency of Amadeus VI., especially in the person of his relative, Louis, second Baron of Vaud, and Amadeus III. Count of Genevois.

The interest of the latter he further won by betrothing his eldest son, a mere boy of seven, to Mary of Genevois, daughter of the Count, a child of the same age.

This match—it is well to note, for it characterizes the man as well as the age—James took good care to break off, sending the young bride back to her own home when the Count of Savoy was of age, and James had no longer occasion for his guardian's services.

At any rate, for the present, owing to the Count of Genevois' interest, a strong Savoyard army crossed the Alps in James's support.

Savoy and Achaia took the field against Milan and Montferrat. The former occupied Chieri, Savigliano, Cherasco, Alba, Mondovì and Cuneo,—reconquered, that is, all the lands of Anjou, which had been lost by the Seneschals. Of these conquests Savigliano and Chieri were permanently secured to Savoy.

Chieri signed an act of free and definitive dedition, on the 19th of May, 1347*, Savigliano, on the 9th of July.

Visconti and Montferrat had drawn the Dauphin

* Cibrario, Storia di Chieri, i. 392.

into their alliance, and espoused the cause of Thomas II. against the usurper Manfred of Cardè, his uncle.

The calamities inflicted upon Piedmont by the atrocious character of these wars, in 1348, moved Clement VI., the Roman Pontiff of Avignon, to send forth his legate, the Bishop of Forlì, with propositions of peace.

A great obstacle was found in the fierce obstinacy of Luchino Visconti, now at the head of his family. But he was providentially removed,—by poison, it is supposed, administered by a faithless wife, Isabel of Fieschi,—in May, 1149. His brother the Archbishop John, and his nephews Matthew II., Galeazzo II., and Bernabò, readily consented to reasonable terms, and a treaty was concluded.

The Visconti were left in possession of Asti and Alba: their other conquests from Anjou were restored to Queen Joan. Savoy retained Chieri and Savigliano; Thomas II. of Saluzzo was reinstated in his rights to the Marquisate: finally the Count of Savoy and the Marquis of Montferrat settled their eternal contest about the city and province of Ivrea, by sharing the sovereignty between them.

This last clause deeply wounded James of Achaia, who was unwilling to relinquish that share which both his father and himself had always held in the Canavese, since it fell to Savoy in 1313, and for which share Achaia had ever since been in arms against Montferrat. Compensation was indeed made to James by an annual income of eight hundred gold florins, to be secured on the lands and castle of Pont Beauvoisin in

Bugey; but these differences between the two cousins were not settled before 1352; nor was it long ere the Prince of Achaia gave unequivocal evidence of his resentment.

One of those sham monarchs who did so much at that epoch to bring the crown of Germany into discredit, the Emperor Charles IV., chanced to pass through Savoy and Piedmont in 1354. It was said of him, that "he had bought the Empire wholesale, and was selling it again by retail." To Amadeus VI. he not only confirmed for ever the title of Imperial Vicar, so often awarded to his predecessors, but granted to him and to his council the supreme jurisdiction in all those cases which had hitherto been referred to the Imperial Chamber; thus emancipating Savoy from all dependence upon any foreign tribunal.

The Prince of Achaia was by him empowered to levy duties on all merchandise transiting through his states (April 20, 1355)*; and James made arrangements to compel the merchants to touch at Turin, and to follow the route which best exposed them to his exactions.

In the meantime his great designs were ripening, and he suddenly took possession of Ivrea.

Anxious, however, to avoid a collision with his cousin, he urged, that his tolls had been set up for the common interest of both States, and that his occupation of Ivrea had no other aim than to take from Montferrat the share he had in that city. At the same

* Datta, Principi d'Acaia, ii. 186.

time that he was taking Ivrea by surprise, James, in fact, sent a challenge to the Marquis of Montferrat a Pavia.

The archbishop John Visconti had died in 1354 his nephews, Galeazzo II. and Bernabò, now rid of their brother Matthew II., whom they had poisoned in 1355, set no limits to their ambition.

John II. of Montferrat, who had done so much for their House, now justly dissatisfied with them, had taken from them Novara, Asti, Alba, Cherasco, and even Pavia, and made an alliance with the minor Marquises of Ceva and Del Carretto, and with Thomas II. of Saluzzo; the latter, for his part, possessed himself of Cuneo.

James of Achaia had taken care to come to an understanding with the Visconti, June 27, 1356, before he ventured on his sudden attack. His declaration of war against Montferrat bears the date of the ensuing August.

Had the character of Amadeus VI. been more political than chivalrous, here was a good opportunity of aggrandising his House at the expense of Montferrat. But he deemed himself bound by the faith of the treaties, and, instead of backing James, he cut him short in his career of aggression.

Seeing the inefficiency of friendly remonstrances, positive orders, and even threats, he came down from the Alps in November, 1356, took several of his castles, and compelled him to submission.

He had however scarcely re-crossed the Alps, when

James again incurred his displeasure by setting up his obnoxious tolls in 1359.

The Green Count once more took the field: he overcame his cousin's resistance, and obtained from his council a declaration, that the Prince of Achaia, as a disloyal vassal, had forfeited his fiefs of Piedmont, and that this province had escheated to its liege lord (January 27, 1360).

His resentment against James was not, however, implacable. The two cousins referred their differences to arbitrators, by whom, on the 8th of May of the same year, compensation was made to James for the loss of Piedmont by large possessions in Savoy.

The Prince continued an inmate of the Count's court and camp till 1363, when, on the 2nd of July, he was restored to his Subalpine states.

During the few years in which the Count held the reins of Piedmont, he achieved not a little toward its pacification, at the same time that he carried out his cousin's scheme, by ousting Montferrat from Ivrea.

The nobles of Canavese, split into factions of Guelphs and Ghibelines, were moreover divided by their allegiance to Savoy and Montferrat; the former of which encompassed their province all round from the Alps and Aosta; and the latter had its residence almost in the very heart of it, at Chivasso. Moved by the high character for wisdom and moderation enjoyed by Amadeus VI., these nobles came in great numbers to pay him homage, and referred to him all matters of dispute. The Green Count could thus hardly

avoid giving umbrage to Montferrat, and war was declared.

The horrors inseparable from all hostilities were, in this case, aggravated by foreign companies of adventure, which went by the name of German or English bands, but were indeed made up of the scum of all the armies of Europe. The Prince of Achaia, the Marquis of Montferrat, and the Visconti, had let these marauders loose upon Piedmont, to each other's injury and to the great desolation of the country.

Amadeus, whose main strength lay in his feudal chivalry of Savoy and Vaud, aspired to purge the land of this great scourge.

He met with a check at Lanzo, not Ciriè, as some have stated*, where he was taken by surprise, and had to pay a ransom of 180,000 gold florins. But he soon recovered from this mishap, and allowed himself no rest until, by his campaigns of 1361 and 1362, he compelled these mercenaries to seek elsewhere a field for their exploits.

He had thus broken the main staff of Montferrat's power. He had besides, on the 26th of December, 1361, contracted an alliance with the Visconti (a family with whom he had been on friendly terms since the marriage of his sister Blanche with Galeazzo II. in 1350), so that Montferrat, placed now between two formidable foes, had to come to terms in 1363, September 17th, and the entire possession of Ivrea was finally secured to Savoy.

* Ricotti, Storia delle Compagnie di Ventura in Italia, ii. 140.

The affairs of Saluzzo were far more intricate, and the settlement of that marquisate more hopeless.

Thomas II., always in dread of the Pretender, his uncle Manfred of Cardè, had done homage to the Dauphin in 1345; he transferred his allegiance to the Visconti in 1348; he revoked it, and joined Montferrat against them, in 1356; but, after an ephemeral success, he was beaten back by the Prince of Achaia in 1357.

In the same year Thomas II. died, and was succeeded by his son Frederic.

This latter, a man of little capacity and less fortune, made his peace with Visconti on very hard terms, in February, 1359. On the 10th of April of the same year he did homage to James, Prince of Achaia, for Revel, Carmagnola, and Racconigi, renewing the act of submission of his grandfather, Frederic, to James's father in 1324.

But when, a few months later, Amadeus VI. had taken the government of Piedmont in his own hands, Frederic was ill-advised enough to refuse him the same homage, and in February, 1360, he sued for the patronage of Bernabò Visconti.

The Green Count marched against Frederic, wrested from him Barge, Revel, and other towns, and gave them as a fief to that uncle or grand-uncle Manfred of Cardè, who had successively been contending for the marquisate against its lawful heir for three generations.

Amadeus then laid siege to Saluzzo itself, July 24,

1363, and so plied it with his war-engines, as soon to reduce it to extremities.

Frederic, to whom his new liege Bernabò Visconti could not, or would not, afford relief, now threw himself on the mercy of the conqueror, repaired to the tent of the Count of Savoy, and surrendered at discretion*. Touched by this trust in his magnanimity, Amadeus VI. referred the matter to arbitration, and obtained from four umpires a sentence, by which the marquisate of Saluzzo was declared a feudal dependency on Savoy (August 5, 1363), as indeed it had been ever since the submission of its princes to Thomas I. of Savoy, in 1216.

But Amadeus VI. had no sooner re-crossed the Alps, leaving Piedmont to the care of his cousin of Achaia, than Frederic broke from his engagements, and again proffered his erratic homage, first to the new dauphin (the eldest son of the King of France), then again to Bernabò Visconti; always willing to acknowledge any master rather than his Savoy neighbours.

The task of bringing him to his duty now devolved on James of Achaia, who entered the lists against him, and pushed on the war with great vigour, till, in February, 1365, he gave him such a terrible defeat near Fossano, that the field on which the action was fought long bore the name of Macellere (the slaughter-ground)†. Bernabò Visconti now interposed, and a

* Muletti, Saluzzo, iv. 49.

† Muratori, Memorie Storiche della Città di Fossano, p. 25,—Muletti, Saluzzo, iv. 70.

truce was concluded on the 13th of April of the same year. The truce however put no end to the disorders of Saluzzo, where domestic feuds, and the claims of numerous younger branches, gave rise to new difficulties, even during the short intervals in which the State was suffered to rest from foreign assaults.

Meanwhile, an injustice analogous to that which had entailed such great miseries on the family of Manfred IV. of Saluzzo since 1323, was now perpetrated by James of Achaia, and was fraught with even more fatal consequences to the House and State of Piedmont.

James of Achaia had, by his second wife, Sibyl de Baux, a son, Philip, whom in 1342, at the time of the contemplated union of that young prince with Mary of Geneva, he had "emancipated," as the phrase was, and appointed his heir.

But in 1362, James, again a widower, married Margaret of Beaujeu, who bore him two other sons, Amadeus and Louis.

Intent on gratifying his young wife, James now annulled the dispositions made in behalf of his eldest son, and even secretly made a will, by which he destined Amadeus to the succession of Piedmont, only bequeathing to Philip a few lands and castles, which he was to hold as a vassal to his younger brother. This will bears the date of May, 1366, and was made therefore a short time after the sailing of Amadeus VI. on his famous expedition to Constantinople. But the Green Count was already a party to the injustice that

was intended to Philip; he had, on the 7th of March, 1364, used his influence to induce the young prince to renounce the succession; and there is now every reason to believe that the testamentary deed of James was made with the Count's full knowledge and consent*.

Notwithstanding the secresy which enveloped all these transactions, Philip knew or suspected the injury he had suffered, and rose in arms against his father.

He took the English adventurers into his pay, and made himself so formidable at their head, that Margaret of Beaujeu, with her two sons, took refuge in Savoy; and even James of Achaia made his escape to Pavia, where he put himself under the protection of his ally, Galeazzo Visconti.

Philip however pursued his father even thither, and, by a great show of repentance and submission, so far won the confidence of that doting parent, that he brought him back with him to Pinerolo.

James, indeed, even whilst he put himself in the power of his son, took good care to enter a protest against any act to which he might be brought by compulsion. This protest was drawn up in the castle of Pavia† on the 25th of April, 1367. Nevertheless it is possible that, away from his cajoling wife, his affection for his eldest son revived, and recalled him to a sense of his injustice, as father and son seem to have

* Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, iii. 208.

† Datta, Principi d'Acaia, ii. 220.

been on good terms at Pinerolo, where James even invested Philip with the fief of Casal d' Osasco, an estate near that town, shortly before his death.

This death took place at Pinerolo, on the 17th of the ensuing May.

Immediately upon the decease of his father, Philip assumed the title of Prince of Achaia: but Margaret of Beaujeu came down from Savoy to dispute it by force of arms. Both parties however agreed to abide the return of Amadeus VI., and the reading of James's will. The Green Count came back in December, 1367; the will was opened in January, and instructions were given to carry it into effect.

Philip once more had recourse to arms, and Piedmont was delivered up to the ferocity of his English marauders. These kept aloof from Turin, whose walls offered an insurmountable barrier to their fury. They were repulsed at Carignano, which they had entered by surprise, but the open country and the smaller towns were turned into a smoking wilderness.

The Count of Savoy, probably exhausted by his more glorious than profitable Eastern enterprise, was unable to afford relief to the Piedmontese. He limited himself to some underhand negotiations to win the foreign hirelings from Philip, and ended at last by sending the latter a challenge to settle the dispute between them by single combat.

Philip, forsaken by his English company, had taken into his pay a German band, under the command of a chief called the Monk of Hecz. After a long

delay, caused by Charles IV. putting forth his Imperial veto, and Galeazzo Visconti restraining Philip by more serious threats of his displeasure, the challenge was accepted, and the day, August 15th, appointed for the encounter. Fifty combatants were to appear against fifty: the Marquis of Montferrat was to be the judge and umpire. The lists were reared at Fossano.

The combat, however, never took place.

On the eve of the appointed day the Monk of Hecz, who with forty-eight of his troop was to enter the lists as champions of Philip, deserted him, and with all his company passed over to the Count of Savoy*.

Philip now shut himself up at Fossano, but relying on a safe-conduct from Amadeus VI., he met him at Savigliano, where, on the 21st of September, he consented to abide by the sentence of a council of arbitration appointed by the Count at Rivoli.

Presently his presence at Rivoli was deemed necessary by the umpires. But Margaret of Beaujeu had in the meantime also come to Rivoli, and she preferred forty-eight criminal charges against her stepson, demanding that he should be put under arrest.

Amadeus VI., with a show of impartiality, ordered the imprisonment of both plaintiff and defendant; but Margaret was almost immediately released†, and Philip, who had thus, step by step, been unsuspectingly brought into the power of his adversaries, was appre-

* Datta, Principi d'Acaia, ii. 238, 240, 256.

† Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, iii. 218.

hended, on the 30th of September, and on the 7th of October conveyed to the castle of Avigliana.

Here history loses sight of him.

It is supposed that he died on the 13th of the same month, and that his body was found floating on the little lake of Avigliana,—perhaps sentenced to die by drowning, a mode of execution sometimes practised by the Counts of Savoy,—perhaps dying by his own hand, and denied Christian burial as a suicide, and consigned to a watery grave.

A dark, terrible mystery hangs over the fate of this prince. On the day of his arrest the umpires assembled at Rivoli declared the will of James of Achaia to be valid*; but on the accusations brought against Philip by Margaret of Beaujéu no sentence seems ever to have been pronounced†.

Those charges referred especially to Philip's ill-treatment of his father, and to the horrid scenes of devastation perpetrated by the English and German cut-throats under his orders. Those charges the ill-fated prisoner refuted to the best of his ability, and in the end threw himself on the mercy of the Count of Savoy, and invoked the safe-conduct which had twice, and in the very amplest and clearest terms, been issued in his favour.

But—it is painful to have to record it against that chivalrous and loyal Green Count—his remonstrances were answered by miserable quibbles, and it seems

* Datta, Principi d'Acaia, ii. 250, 253.

† Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, iii. 219.

very plain that his ruin was deliberately preconcerted. It is possible that his crimes may have filled all measures of clemency; that the wildness of his temper in early youth may have alienated both his father and his natural protector the Count of Savoy, so that, in the end, any means was deemed lawful that could bring him to justice; but it is also not unreasonable to think that the worst traits in his character only came out when he was writhing under the sense of unmerited wrong.

Amadeus, the young Prince of Achaia, was only six years old at the time of his brother's tragedy; and the Count of Savoy, as his guardian, again took Piedmont under his immediate control.

That country at this epoch was indeed in want of a strong and wise ruler.

All Italy was alarmed at the rising power of the two brothers, Bernabò and Galeazzo Visconti.

John II. of Montferrat, owing to the treachery of his foreign mercenaries, had lost Pavia, Alba, and other places (1359–1364). Galeazzo Visconti had married his daughter, Violante, to Lionel, Duke of Clarence, son of the King of England, and given him as a dowry Mondovì, Caraglio, Cuneo, and Bra (1368).

Lionel died without issue in the same year. The English adventurers, under the command of Edward Spenser (Le Despencer), who held those towns for him, were summoned to deliver them up to Galeazzo, but refused, and bargained for them with Montferrat, who thus came into possession of them.

A new war now broke out between Milan and Montferrat, in which the latter lost Casale and Valenza.

In the midst of these disasters John II. died, May 20th, 1372, leaving three sons, all in their nonage,—Secondo Ottone or Secondotto, John, and Theodore. Secondotto was destined to succeed, but his father, aware of his evil disposition, had put him under the guardianship of the Count of Savoy and of Otho of Brunswick, a friend and relative of the late Marquis, the same whom Joan of Naples chose as her fourth husband in 1376. John II. had further provided that neither the young heir nor his brothers after him should be trusted with the government till they reached their twenty-fifth year.

Amadeus VI. had long persevered in his alliance with the Visconti, and a partition of Montferrat between Savoy and Milan had, it would seem, even been contemplated*. But he now became aware that Montferrat was a natural barrier against the overwhelming power of Milan, and he was besides dissatisfied with Bernabò Visconti for the countenance given by him to Saluzzo in 1360.

He had therefore willingly listened to the proposals of an alliance with Montferrat, and had an interview with John II. previous to the death of the latter.

The negotiation was followed up between him and his co-guardian, Otho of Brunswick, and presently all Italy joined in a great league against Milan. This league consisted of Pope Gregory XI., the Emperor

* Leo, Italienische Staaten, iii. 569.

Charles IV., the Queen of Naples, Francesco Carrara, Lord of Padua, Nicholas of Este, Marquis of Ferrara, and the Republic of Florence. It was concluded on the 7th of July, 1372, and the Count of Savoy was appointed commander-in-chief of its forces.

The wars of these days were entirely carried on by soldiers of adventure, and the Visconti, who never appeared on the field in person, had secured the services of Sir John Hawkwood, the greatest of English condottieri.

Hawkwood had marched westward, and with all his forces invested Asti, now the main stronghold of Montferrat. Savoy and Montferrat came forward to the rescue, and the Englishman was preparing to give them battle, when he was thwarted in his operations by two deputies of the Visconti, who had instructions from Bianca of Savoy, wife of Galeazzo, on no account to allow her son, the Count of Vertus (Gian Galeazzo), to run into any danger, and put their veto on the contemplated action, lest the young Count should either risk his life in the engagement, or forfeit his honour by shunning it. The blunt Englishman protested he would brook no mere scriveners in his council of war, and, suddenly abandoning the service of Milan, passed over to the opposite party*.

His defection gave at once the greatest advantage to the League.

The Milanese troops fell back from Asti, and were driven from the lands of Piedmont and Montferrat.

* Denina, Italia Occidentale, ii. 37.

Amadeus VI. now took the offensive: he crossed the Ticino (January, 1373), pushed forward towards Pavia, and laid waste the suburban gardens of Galeazzo*. Hence, advancing rashly into the territory of Mantua and Bergamo, he strove to join his allies of Rome and Ferrara, who, under Hawkwood, had taken Bologna, and were marching upon the Adda. The allies however suffered a defeat at Montechiaro, and Amadeus had to fall back on the Apennines, whence through Lucca and Genoa he led his troops back to Rivoli, in February, 1374. It must never be forgotten that, unlike the Italian princes, the Count of Savoy led into the field his feudal retainers, whose term of service generally expired at the end of one season.

In June of the same year he came to terms with the Count of Vertus, and soon brought Otho of Brunswick to follow his example in the peace as he had in the war. The ravages of the pestilence which the foreign hordes brought with them into Italy now compelled the other parties to lay down their arms in the year following.

The fortunate Visconti weathered this as they had done many other storms, and came off from the struggle mightier than ever. Galeazzo died in 1378, and the Count of Vertus, his successor in Pavia, under the name of Gian Galeazzo, shared with his uncle Bernabò the sovereignty of Lombardy. In 1385 Bernabò fell treacherously by the hand of his nephew, who thus remained sole master of the dominions of

* Leo, Italienische Staaten, iii. 321.

the House; an absolute mastery, to which the Imperial diploma of Wenceslaus, creating Gian Galeazzo Duke of Milan, in 1395, could hardly add material importance.

Evil days now came for the House of Montferrat.

Secondotto, heir of John II., had not only made his peace with Galeazzo Visconti, but, in 1377, married Violante, his daughter, and widow of Lionel of Clarence. Entirely in the toils of Visconti, the young Marquis was robbed of Asti by their intrigues.

His mad ferocity and brutal vices, however, soon brought him to an early death, in a vulgar brawl with one of the German soldiers in his suite, at Mataleto, near Langhirano, in the territory of Parma, 1378.

His second brother, John III., only survived him for a few years: he died more gloriously, fighting by the side of his guardian, Otho of Brunswick, who had gone to the rescue of his wife, Joan of Naples, in 1381.

The third of the sons of John II., Theodore II., had, at the peace of 1364, been sent an infant to the court of Galeazzo Visconti, at Pavia, and was there brought up with the young Count of Vertus. At his brother's death in 1381, bereft also of his valiant guardian, Brunswick, who remained a captive at Naples, he was by Visconti put in possession of Montferrat, but under such conditions as it pleased Gian Galeazzo to dictate; —at any rate deprived of Asti and Casale. During the lifetime of Gian Galeazzo, Montferrat was utterly crushed by the preponderance of Milan.

On the other hand, Saluzzo had sided with Visconti at the time of the League of 1372, and was now consequently exposed to the wrath of Amadeus VI. of Savoy.

After his truce with the Count of Vertus, in 1374, the Green Count invaded the territory of Saluzzo, in June of the same year, and brought the Marquis, Frederic, to such straits, that, in his despair, he hoisted the Fleurs-de-Lys, and declared that, in consequence of the homage done by his father Thomas II. to Humbert, the last of Viennese Dauphins, in 1345, and since the annexation of Dauphiny to France in 1349, Saluzzo was by right a French fief.

The King of France, Charles V., now offered his mediation, and Amadeus VI., notwithstanding the support of the Emperor, who claimed Saluzzo as an imperial fief, and made it over to Savoy, was so tied down by his marriage connection with the House of France, that he suffered the differences between himself and his refractory vassal to be referred to the arbitration of the Parliament of Paris, whereby France was constituted a judge in her own cause*.

Thus had both Montferrat and Saluzzo greatly descended from their rank as independent states, and Savoy now found two great powers, Milan and France, bordering on her Piedmontese territories.

As if to aggravate the evil, and to place her more helplessly in the power of France, Gian Galeazzo betrothed his daughter Valentina to Louis, Duke of Tou-

* Muletti, Saluzzo, iv. 132.

raine, Count of Valois, afterwards Duke of Orléans, brother of Charles VI. of France, in 1387 (the marriage was celebrated two years later), and the young French prince received as a dowry the city and county of Asti, together with the sum of 400,000 florins*.

The claims of the grandson of Valentina, Louis XII. of France, as her successor at Milan, led to the conquest of that duchy by the French, in 1499.

As a set-off against such grievous losses, the dominion of the House of Anjou in Piedmont came to an end about this very time, and Savoy came in for a large share of its spoils.

Queen Joan of Naples, Countess of Provence, had no children left of the four husbands to whom she had been successively united. She had, therefore, called to her inheritance Charles of Durazzo, one of the princes of that branch of the House of Anjou who reigned in Hungary (1368). She had, however, after her marriage with Otho of Brunswick in 1376, annulled her dispositions; whereupon Charles of Durazzo had come down with an Hungarian army in 1380, had received from Pope Urban VI., the Queen's enemy, the investiture of the kingdom of Naples, at Rome (1381), and, meeting with but little resistance, he had triumphantly entered the capital of the kingdom, on the 16th of July of that year.

Joan had shut herself up in the Castle dell' Uovo, and her husband, Otho of Brunswick, had come to her rescue; but the latter fell into the enemy's hands, and

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 144.

the Queen surrendered (August 20th). She was afterwards, May 22, 1382, either strangled with a silken string or smothered under a feather-bed; but previous to her captivity, she had, on the 29th of June, 1380, adopted as her son Louis, brother of Charles V. of France, and guardian of Charles VI.; appointing him her successor both in Naples and Provence. Louis bore the title of Duke of Anjou: hence the long contentions between the old House of Anjou, now represented by Charles of Durazzo, and the new House, of Louis.

The county of Provence immediately acknowledged its new lord, Louis of Anjou; but the kingdom was in the occupation of Durazzo, and must needs be conquered.

For this purpose, Louis of Anjou, who needed the aid of Amadeus VI. of Savoy, purchased it by the cession of his rights over all that the House of Anjou still possessed north of the Maritime Alps (February 19th, 1381)*.

The so-called county of Piedmont, belonging to Anjou, had by this time dwindled to very inconsiderable dimensions: but Cuneo, the most important of those possessions, the great stronghold in those parts of Western Italy, which, ever since its foundation in the twelfth century, had aspired to the dignity of a free city—which had so long been an object of dispute between Anjou and Saluzzo, between Anjou and Milan, —which in the course of one hundred and seventy

* Gioffredo, Alpi Marittime, Mon. Hist. Patr. Script. ii. 874.

years had successively obeyed fifteen different masters —came at last into the hands of Savoy by spontaneous dedition (April 10, 1382)*.

On the 17th of July of the same year, the army collected by Anjou and Savoy for the conquest of Naples, encamped in the neighbourhood of Asti.

The Guelphs of that city, expelled at the time that it fell into the hands of Gian Galeazzo, had, on the previous March, tendered their allegiance to the popular Count of Savoy. But Amadeus VI., led away by the cares of his southern expedition, attached no importance to that offer, and Asti remained in the power of Milan till it was ceded to a French prince by the marriage contract to which allusion has been made (1387).

The southern expedition of Savoy and Anjou had fatal results.

The army reached the Neapolitan frontier in the heat of an unhealthy summer, 1382,—too late for the rescue of Queen Joan, who had been murdered in May, and in vain also to avenge her death.

The Green Count fell ill and died at St. Stefano di Puglia, on the 1st of March, 1383; Louis of Anjou, after a short and not brilliant campaign, was also carried off by disease at Bisceglio, province of Bari (10th October, 1384). His army dispersed.

His conqueror, Charles of Durazzo, reigned at Naples, as Charles III., till 1385: he then marched

* Partenio, Cuneo, p. 81.—St. Simon, Guerre des Alpes, Histoire de Coni, p. 190.

to the conquest of Hungary, and there met with a violent death by the hands of assassins, in 1316.

The crown of Naples was placed on the brow of his son, Ladislaus, a boy ten years old: but Provence persevered in its allegiance to Louis II., son of Louis of Anjou, also a minor.

The Houses of Durazzo and Anjou—or say, of Naples and Provence—continued thus in antagonism, till Joan II., sister and heiress of Ladislaus, Queen of Naples, called Alphonso of Aragon and Louis III. of Anjou successively to her inheritance, and conferred on them conflicting claims, which were eventually transferred to the Houses of France and Spain.

The town and county of Nice were at this time a part of Provence.

They had remained in some kind of dependence on the Counts of Provence ever since the times of the first crusade. But the spirit of freedom had very early developed itself in the trading community of Nice; and that city had always obtained fair terms both from the House of Raymond Bérenger, and from that of Charles of Anjou, who had inherited it by marriage, in 1245.

The consequence of these very liberties was a strong feeling of loyalty on the part of the grateful people towards its liege lords; so that, when Provence fell off from Charles of Durazzo and acknowledged Louis of Anjou, Nice in her turn fell off from Provence, and, after the death of Charles of Durazzo, declared in favour of his son Ladislaus.

This young prince however, or his guardians, were unable to afford support to so distant a province; and the people of Nice were advised by the Court of Naples to look for a protector amongst the powerful lords of the neighbourhood.

Nice was now distracted by factions; some of its nobles inclined to the Visconti, some were in favour of the Republic of Genoa. But a large majority declared for Savoy, and two of the lords of the powerful family of Grimaldi, who were at the head of the predominant party, came, on the 2nd of August, 1388, to Chambéry, to offer the sovereignty of their country to Savoy*.

Amadeus VII., the Red Count, had here succeeded his father: he took possession of the new province, on the 22nd of September. The important fortress of Vinadio, with the whole of Val di Stura, and Barcellonette with the valley of the Ubaye, the very key to those new maritime possessions, came also into his power by the way. These acquisitions the House of Provence, under a heavy debt to that of Savoy for the expedition of Naples, was soon fain to sanction.

Thus were the dominions of Savoy extended to the Mediterranean, and its princes attained the rank of maritime potentates.

In the meantime the death of Amadeus VI., the minority and feeble reign of Amadeus VII., and again the nonage of Amadeus VIII., greatly weakened the influence of Savoy south of the Alps, and gave the upper-hand to her rivals, especially to Montferrat and Milan.

* Gioffredo, Alpi Marittime, p. 908.

Since the year 1377, however, Amadeus of Achaia, having reached his fourteenth year, was emancipated, and declared to be of age. The Savoy princes of the Piedmontese branch were thus, in the greatest need, replaced in their position as the vanguard of Savoy in Italy. In his earlier years the attention of Amadeus of Achaia was diverted from the affairs of Piedmont by the contemplated recovery of his Grecian principalities. Again, at the death of Amadeus VII. he found himself involved in the dissensions of the court of Chambéry; so that it was only in 1393 that he at last came back to Italy, all alive to the game of Italian politics.

Already, in 1385 and 1388, there had been wars between the Prince and the Marquis of Saluzzo, whilst the Parliament of Paris were debating the question of the dependence of the latter marquisate on Savoy.

In 1390, May 10th, sentence, as might be expected, was pronounced against Savoy, and Saluzzo was declared a French fief. Amadeus, however, protested in the name of Savoy, and appealed to arms (1393–1394). He had laid siege to Monasterolo, near Savigliano, in the latter year, when Thomas, eldest son of the Marquis Frederic, was sent to release the place. An encounter ensued, in which the heir of Saluzzo was taken prisoner (April 6th, 1394)*. His captivity lasted two years: his father had hardly paid the heavy ransom exacted by the captor, when

* Muletti, Saluzzo, iv. 187.

he died (October 5th, 1396), leaving a ruined state to his son, who now became the Marquis Thomas III.

War in the meantime had been likewise almost incessant between Savoy and Montferrat.

At the time of the league against Visconti, in 1372, an agreement had been entered into between Amadeus VII. and Otho of Brunswick, acting in the name of his ward, Secondotto, by which Montferrat pledged all its lands in Canavese, besides its old capital Chivasso and other towns, as security for the sums it had to contribute as its share in the war.

The conditions of that treaty were never observed. War had consequently broken out, especially in Canavese.

This unhappy province had at all times been torn by the feuds of its nobles,—the numerous branches of Valperga and St. Martin, most of whom inclined to favour Savoy, and the Biandrate of San Giorgio, who had come in by the aid of their cousins of Montferrat, and generally fought under their standards*.

There had already been war, in 1387, when Amadeus VII. of Savoy and Amadeus of Achaia had defeated Theodore II. of Montferrat, under the walls of Verrua; but those differences had been settled by the mediation of Gian Galeazzo Visconti.

In 1391 Amadeus of Achaia, left alone to fight Italian battles, took into his pay numerous bands of mercenaries, to the great alarm of his neighbours.

* Cibrario, Studi Storici, i. 27.

Theodore of Montferrat, on his guard against him, made an alliance with Louis of Touraine, the new Count of Asti; and, to avoid cause of offence, the confederates made overtures to the Prince of Achaia, inviting him to join their peaceful league.

There had been an interview between Achaia and Montferrat at Chivasso, and here Amadeus was accused of an attempt against the lives of Theodore II. and his family (1394). The charge, however, rests only on the deposition of obscure witnesses; and we must observe that false suspicions of dark deeds of that nature were, in those atrocious ages, as frequent in Italy as their actual perpetration*.

At any rate, the resentment of the Marquis, even if he gave credit to the dark accusation, did not lead to an immediate outbreak.

The war only commenced in good earnest in 1396. In that year Saluzzo had joined Asti and Montferrat, and the latter had given the command of his forces to Facino Cane, a native of Casale, one of the noblest warriors of that Italian school of Condottieri who were now everywhere gloriously driving the foreign mercenaries off the field.

The war was carried on on both sides with a ruthless fury, which laid waste all Piedmont; the only important result however was, for Savoy, the conquest of Mondovì, which opened its gates to the Prince of Achaia, in July, 1396.

The fortunes of Mondovì had been very nearly of

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 261.

the same tenour as those of its neighbour, Cuneo, with which it had a common origin.

Founded towards the middle of the twelfth century by the rural population of the neighbourhood, trampled upon by their insolent feudal nobles, it constituted itself into a free community under the patronage of the Bishop of Asti; it then acknowledged the sway of Charles of Anjou; it fell successively a prey to Milan and Montferrat, during the stormy times of Queen Joan of Naples. In 1347 it gave itself freely to James of Achaia and Amadeus VI. of Savoy. In the course of the same year it fell into the hands of Luchino Visconti, and submitted to the sway of Milan till 1367, when Galeazzo II. gave it as part of his daughter's dowry to the Duke of Clarence; hence it came into the hands of Montferrat in 1368, and it still belonged to the latter state when it was wrested from Theodore II. by Amadeus of Achaia.

Since the 8th of June, 1388, Mondovì had become the see of a new bishopric, and risen to the rank of a city*.

The terrible sufferings and utter exhaustion of the country forced the belligerent parties to lay down their arms. They referred their inextricable differences first to Gian Galeazzo Visconti, then to Philip Duke of Burgundy, finally to Amadeus VIII. of Savoy.

This young prince had taken the reins of govern-

* Lobera, Antichità di Mondovì, p. 139.—Grassi, Chiesa di Monteregale, ii. 162.

ment in 1398, but had no share as yet in Italian quarrels, and had moreover gained, even at so early a period of his life, great credit for uprightness and fair dealing, and aspired to the amiable office of universal peace-maker.

The efforts of all these princes were, however, unavailing, and even the Count of Savoy, in 1401, dismissed the subject, as beyond all chances of a satisfactory arrangement.

There was, therefore, impossibility of either war or peace, and, as a measure of necessity, Achaia and Montferrat met at St. Raphael di Cimena on the Po, opposite to Chivasso, and there agreed on a truce, which was to last for three years and a half, and which left all the matters at issue between them undecided*.

This was in 1401. On the 7th of May of the ensuing year Amadeus of Achaia died at Pinerolo.

He was succeeded in Piedmont by his brother Ludovico, or Louis, the last of the Princes of Achaia.

This prince had already shown distinguished valour both at home and in distant expeditions; but he was a man of more yielding disposition, and the armistice of 1401 was, on the 29th of March, 1403, prolonged for ten years. The good understanding between the two families was further promoted by a marriage of Margaret, daughter of the deceased Amadeus of Achaia, with Theodore of Montferrat. It was now agreed that Mondovì, of which Montferrat was still

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 289.

loth to relinquish possession, should be governed by officers appointed with the consent of both princes.

In the meanwhile, events of the greatest general importance had taken place in Italy.

Gian Galeazzo Visconti had brought nearly all Lombardy and Romagna under his subjection, and was now on the point of achieving the subjugation of Tuscany.

The Italian condottieri in his pay had, by their valour, reared up for him a splendid edifice of a Lombard duchy, far nobler than any transalpine kingdom of those times.

The wealth and power which the great city of Milan always placed within reach of its rulers—enabling them, as we have seen, from the days of Archbishop Heribert, to lord it all over North Italy—had compelled two-thirds of that country to bow in obedience to the subtle genius of the Milanese tyrant.

His warriors, put to the test by a German host, led against them by Robert, Elector Palatine, King of the Romans, had once more loftily re-established the superiority of Italian over foreign arms*.

Providence often works out good ends through the very worst means; and the ambition and craft of Gian Galeazzo was well-nigh instrumental in bringing the whole of Italy under one sceptre, when he was unexpectedly carried off by the plague, on the 3rd of September, 1402, aged fifty-five.

His two sons, Gian Maria and Filippo Maria, were

* Hallam's Middle Ages, i. 336.

at this juncture only thirteen and twelve years old, and under the guardianship of the Duchess Catherine, their mother.

But the condottieri of Gian Galeazzo undid their own work, and shared amongst them the spoils of their lord.

The Duchess-Regent died by poison in 1404. Gian Maria, a puny monster, was assassinated in 1412, and all was utter confusion till Filippo Maria, a craven like his father and brother, but gifted in a singular degree with that craft which distinguished the whole of his loathsome race, succeeded in patching together the tatters of his father's ducal mantle, and reigned, with almost undiminished power, till 1447.

The disorganization of the state of Milan, at the death of Gian Galeazzo, once more restored the fortunes of Montferrat.

Theodore II., the reigning Marquis, was, by the regent Catherine, put in possession of Casale in 1404, March 4th. He made himself, immediately afterwards, master of Vercelli; and his ambition being now turned to the eastward, he came to a treaty of alliance with Savoy and Achaia: he made a definitive cession of Mondovì, and betrothed his son, Gian Giacomo, to Joan, sister of Amadeus VIII. (April 11th, 1407).

Safe from aggression from that quarter, Theodore II. now came to an understanding with Facino Cane, by far the ablest of Gian Galeazzo's generals, who had

secured in his grasp the most important cities of the duchy, Pavia, Novara, Alessandria, etc.

Facino, always devoted to the interests of his native lord, of Montferrat, now entered the Milanese territory, where the death of Gian Galeazzo had revived the senseless passions of Guelphs and Ghibelines, and, giving the latter party the upperhand, governed the duchy in the name of the vicious but impotent young despot Gian Maria Visconti.

The latter, however, had cunning enough to throw himself into the hands of the Guelphs, and to call the French to his aid.

Besides Asti, which the troops of that nation still held in the name of the Duke of Orléans, they had also possession of Genoa.

That city was yet at the height of its prosperity. It had extended its sovereignty over both Rivieras, and had even overstepped the Apennines, and added Novi to its territory, ceded or pawned to that republic by John II. of Montferrat, in his distress for money, in 1359. Its implacable factions proved, however, fatal to the liberty of Genoa, and successively brought it under the sway of Anjou or Visconti, till, in 1396, at the close of ten revolutions following one upon another in the course of four years, it had put itself under the patronage of the French monarch.

Boucicault, Marshal of France, governed Genoa in the king's name; it was to him that Gian Maria Visconti applied for aid, and instantly the Marshal, in the king's name and as an ally of Visconti, and chief of

the Guelphs, marched into Lombardy and made himself master of Milan.

Theodore of Montferrat and Facino Cane, in their turn, occupied Novi, and crossing the Apennines, favoured by the Ghibeline fugitives of Genoa, wrested that city from the French (September, 1409).

The Marshal hastened back to oppose them, but, defeated in several encounters, and finally soundly beaten at Novi, September 26th, he was sent back, crest-fallen, to his own country.

The Marquis of Montferrat was hailed Lord of Genoa, first for one, then for five years.

Facino Cane secured Novi for himself.

He presently, however, went back into Lombardy, regained his ascendancy over the two young Visconti at Pavia and Milan, October 6th, and, defeating all the schemes of those treacherous princes and their minions, he was rapidly bringing into his hands the whole heritage of Gian Galeazzo.

In the height of success, he was cut off at Pavia by a fit of the gout, on the 16th of May, 1412, only a few hours after Gian Maria Visconti had fallen beneath the daggers of his assassins, and while he was urging the bystanders to avenge the murder*.

His fall once more restored the ascendancy of the surviving Visconti.

Filippo Maria married, only a few days later, Facino's widow, Beatrice di Tenda, a lady of mature age, but who brought him as a dowry 400,000 gold ducats,

* Ricotti, Compagnie di Ventura, ii. 225.

Novara, Vercelli, Alessandria, Tortona, and withal her husband's redoubted company, in which Francesco Bussone, a native of Carmagnola, had already distinguished himself.

With the dowry of Beatrice, whom he shortly afterwards requited by an ignominious death on the scaffold, and by the genius of Carmagnola, whom he also repaid with dark ingratitude, Philip Maria, from 1412 to 1424, won victory after victory. To the cities of Lombardy and Piedmont already mentioned, he added Bobbio, Genoa, Albenga, and Savona; whilst Carmagnola also subjected the valleys of Ticino to him, and by a partial defeat of the Swiss at Arbedo, above Bellinzona, in 1422, put a check to the inroads of those terrible mountaineers, and warned them that the hour for the invaders of Italy had not yet struck*.

Theodore II. of Montferrat, driven out of Genoa after only two years' government, had to yield to the fortune of Visconti, and signed a peace with Philip Maria, on the 20th of March, 1417. Of all the possessions that had fallen to his lot during his partnership with Facino Cane, he was only allowed to retain Casale. He died soon afterwards, December 2nd, 1418.

Even previous to this epoch, and whilst Montferrat was busy in Lombardy and at Genoa, the two cousins Amadeus of Savoy and Louis of Achaia had settled their quarrels with Saluzzo.

The Marquis, Thomas III., a vain and weak prince,

* Müller, Geschichte der Schweitz, iii. 210.

had been emboldened by the presence of French garrisons at Asti and at Genoa, to coquet with the Court of France, and pleaded the repeated decisions of the parliament of Paris, to declare himself free from all allegiance to Savoy.

There had been other causes for ill-blood, and, in 1404, Thomas III. of Saluzzo had drawn his sword against Louis of Achaia.

France so far abetted Saluzzo as to seize all the property of Savoyard and Piedmontese subjects within her dominions; but, for the rest, the civil and foreign wars which distracted that country prevented her lending more substantial aid.

In 1409 and the two following years, the war broke out afresh, just at the epoch of the disasters of the French arms under Boucicault, at Genoa, by which the Marquis of Saluzzo was exposed to the long-contemplated chastisement of the princes of Savoy. In October, 1410, Louis of Achaia signalized himself by the conquest of Polonghera and Pancalieri.

At last, in 1413, the two princes subdued the whole Marquisate, sat down before Saluzzo on the 12th of June, and after ten days' siege brought their truant vassal to a capitulation, the first condition of which was a renewal of homage, to Savoy for Saluzzo, and for Revel and Carmagnola to Achaia*.

Thomas III. died in 1416, and was succeeded by his son Louis I. (1416–1475), who grew up under the patronage of Amadeus VIII., and proved a dutiful

* Muletti, Saluzzo, iv. 324.

and affectionate vassal and friend to him throughout his long life.

The Marquises of Ceva and other allies of Saluzzo were equally compelled to bow to the supremacy of the conqueror.

Not long after the subjugation of Saluzzo, Louis of Achaia died, December 6th, 1418.

Thus, at last, and after one hundred and twenty-three years' separation, Amadeus VIII. added the Piedmontese fiefs to the other possessions of Savoy. The Princes of Achaia had acquitted themselves of their task; they had upheld the rank and forwarded the interests of their house amongst emulous potentates, and now yielded back their trust with undiminished lustre.

About this time Amadeus VIII. began to turn his earnest attention to Italian affairs.

The general course of Italian events presently brought Montferrat also under subjection to Savoy.

Philip Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, had been unwise enough to provoke the enmity of the able general who had built up his throne.

The Count of Carmagnola had fled from him in disdain, and, seeking for friends among those he deemed natural enemies of his foe, he came to Ivrea, in January, 1425, to induce Amadeus VIII. of Savoy to enter the field against the Duke of Milan. He next proceeded to Venice; and that republic, which after its blood-stained victory over Francesco da Carrara, lord of Padua, in 1405, aspired to the rank of a con-

tinental power in Italy, appointed Carmagnola commander-in-chief of its forces.

An alliance, which had long been preparing, was at length concluded between Venice, Florence, and Savoy (July 11th, 1426).

War, however, never very earnestly entered into the plans of Amadeus "the Peaceful," and the hostilities on his part were carried on with sufficient leisure. In the same year Amadeus VIII. was already listening to the proposals of Pope Martin V., who exerted himself for the pacification of Christendom.

The battle of Maclodio, October 11th, 1427, in which the Milanese generals were crushed by the superior genius of Carmagnola, now caused Philip Maria serious uneasiness, and he deemed it advisable to detach Amadeus of Savoy from the league.

He tempted him by the cession of Vercelli, and by an offer of marriage to his eldest daughter, Mary of Savoy.

Amadeus VIII., with utter disregard of the terms which bound him to his allies, made his separate peace with Milan, in 1427, December 2nd.

Vercelli and its territory, as far as the Sesia, came by this means into the possession of Savoy.

Its bishops had made it a large and important state since the eleventh century; but the authority of the see had soon declined, and it came at last to an end, soon after the wars of the Lombard League. In 1235 the free citizens expelled the Bishop from their walls, and in 1243 they brought the very extensive lands

of the diocese, minor towns, and castles, and whole rural counties, under their feudal jurisdiction.

The city, however, was soon rent by Guelph and Ghibeline factions, headed by the rival houses of Avogadro and Tizzoni; so that the Bishops, at the head of the former family, several members of whom successively filled the episcopal chair, regained part of their wonted ascendancy.

The rise of Matthew Visconti gave the upperhand to the Ghibelines in the early part of the fourteenth century, and Vercelli had now to choose between the tyranny of Milan and that of Montferrat; after the death of Facino Cane, the town came definitively into the hands of Philip Maria Visconti, and Theodore II. of Montferrat made a formal cession of it to Milan.

The country had, in the meanwhile, followed different destinies.

Biella, with its mountainous districts, had always been staunch in its allegiance to the Bishops of Vercelli, who had at all times found a safe refuge in its castle, when driven from their see by political storms.

Towards the middle of the fourteenth century, however, Biella, which was also municipally organized into a free town, came into frequent collision with the bishop, Lombardo, and more violently still with his successors, Emanuel and John Fieschi. The rapacity of the latter prelate so far angered the citizens, that they threw him into a dungeon in his own castle, in May, 1377*; they then sued for the protection of Savoy.

* Mullatera, Memorie della Città di Biella, p. 62.

The consequence was a spontaneous surrender of their liberties to the Green Count, Amadeus VI., on the 6th of August, 1379.

The rural county of Santhià, San Germano, and other dependencies on the diocese, had already come into the hands of the same prince, shortly before.

In the midst of the disorders arising in the Duchy of Milan, at the death of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, in 1404, Amadeus VIII. had made further acquisitions; and whilst Vercelli obeyed the orders of Facino Cane or of Theodore II. of Montferrat, many towns and castles of the diocese opened their gates to Savoy, and the noble families, chiefly the numerous branches of the Avogadro and Arboreo, made their obeisance to its prince.

During the war of 1426–7, the whole diocese was easily overrun by the Savoyards, and the standard of Milan floated only on the ramparts of the capital.

This was also delivered up at the peace, and Manfred of Saluzzo, as Marshal of Savoy, took possession of it, in the name of Amadeus VIII. in January, 1428. On the 29th of September of the following year, the marriage of Mary of Savoy with the Duke of Milan was celebrated in Vercelli itself.

At an earlier epoch, May, 1411, the Val d'Ossola had sued for the patronage of Savoy.

Threatened by the German bands of the Swiss cantons and of Upper Valais, and equally dreading the tyranny of Facino Cane, the mountaineers of that valley, formerly subjects of the Bishop of Novara, had

given preference to the just and pious Amadeus VIII.* This prince however, worsted in Upper Valais, where his troops on a peaceful march through those districts were fallen upon by the wild inhabitants, had been unable to defend the Val d'Ossola against the Swiss invaders, in 1416; and when Carmagnola drove back the Swiss at Arbedo, in 1422, the Val d'Ossola again came under the dominion of Milan.

The league of 1426, which had been the cause of aggrandisement to Savoy, had well-nigh proved utterly fatal to Montferrat.

Gian Giacomo, son of Theodore II., had, not without reluctance, been induced to enter that league, out of deference to Amadeus VIII., his brother-in-law. In obedience to the same influence, he had withdrawn from it, and made his peace with Philip Maria, on the 6th of April, 1428; only a few days before the two republics of Venice and Florence came also to a suspension of hostilities; for Amadeus VIII., although he abandoned his allies in the war, deemed it his duty nevertheless to aid them by peaceful negotiation.

But the peace between Venice and Milan could never be sincere: and Gian Giacomo, who found the terms he had accepted too galling and onerous, allowed himself to be dragged into a new coalition against Milan, in 1431: he committed himself to a war, which led to the loss of his states, and the fall of Casale (December 10, 1431).

This last step had been taken in opposition to

* Cibrario, Studi Storici, i. 189.

Savoy, and if we may believe the panegyrists of the latter House*, it would even seem that Gian Giacomo had endeavoured to disturb the harmony existing between the republic of Venice and Amadeus VIII.

In his distress, however, the unfortunate Marquis repaired to Savoy, and, in an interview he had with his brother-in-law, at Thonon, February 13, 1432, he gave up, it is said, Chivasso, Volpiano, Trino, and all those lands in Lower Canavese, and on the left bank of the Po, which had been so long a subject of dispute between the two emulous houses. He also consented to do homage to Savoy for the whole or part of his remaining dominions.

In return for so enormous a sacrifice, Amadeus was to take under his protection the little of Montferrat that was yet uninvaded, and to effect a reconciliation between Gian Giacomo and his formidable enemy at Milan.

Peace was indeed concluded (April 26, 1433), and the Duke of Milan engaged to restore Gian Giacomo to his dominions. But the terms of the agreement were not strictly observed, and the Marquis had, in 1434, January 29, to subscribe to a new compact, which reduced his state within even narrower limits.

Gian Giacomo next applied for a restitution of the lands occupied by Savoy; and when referred by Amadeus to the treaty of Thonon, he denied the very existence of such a treaty.

The two relatives came thus to an open quarrel.

* Guichenon, Royale Maison de Savoie, ii. 49.

But war on the part of Montferrat was out of the question, and negotiations were opened at Turin between John, eldest son of the Marquis, and Louis of Savoy, son of Amadeus VIII. By a monstrous abuse of his position, and in defiance of all the laws of nations, Louis of Savoy laid hands on the young heir of Montferrat, and threw him into prison.

With this hostage in her hands, Savoy now dictated her own terms; and the Treaty of Turin, January 27, 1435, confirmed, in the main, the terms of the alleged convention of Thonon.

There are insoluble doubts about these melancholy transactions.

The pretended treaty of Thonon certainly never came to light. On the other hand, the arrest of John of Montferrat, described by historians of that State*, is stoutly denied by writers favourable to Savoy†.

It is indeed sufficiently in keeping with the character of Louis of Savoy: but we cannot easily determine what share Amadeus VIII. himself had in the outrage, or to what extent he allowed his son to reap the benefit of it: for Amadeus had already, since the 16th of October of the previous year, sought his solitude of Ripaille, and professedly estranged himself from worldly concerns. But it certainly looks like a foul stain on the memory of a prince, who rises otherwise so conspicuously above the common moral standard of his contemporaries.

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 321.

† Guichenon, Royale Maison de Savoie, ii. 55.

By those means, whatever may be thought of them, the Po became now a permanent limit between Savoy and Montferrat, almost at the same time that the Sesia traced the boundary-line between the former State and Milan.

By the terms of the Treaty of Turin, Montferrat had also consented to do homage to Savoy.

It is true John of Montferrat loudly protested against the violence which had brought upon him such indignity; but that marquisate had henceforth no chance of escaping from the allegiance of Savoy without falling into the toils of Milan.

And in the same manner, as we have seen, Saluzzo had no refuge against the supremacy of Savoy, except by a surrender of its independent rights to France.

CHAPTER V.

ORGANIZATION OF PIEDMONT.

Thus had the Counts of Savoy founded a State in Italy. Savoy was by the Emperor Sigismund erected into a duchy, in favour of Amadeus VIII. on the 19th of February, 1416. After the extinction of the branch of Achaia, on the 16th of December, 1418, Amadeus himself took the title of Count of Piedmont; and he gave his Italian possessions the name of a Principality when, on the 15th of August, 1424, he appointed his eldest son, Amadeus, to govern them.

The new Prince established his residence at Pinerolo, as if it had been the wish of the Duke of Savoy to assure his new subjects that nothing should be changed in Piedmont, and that his son had merely taken the place vacated by the last Prince of Achaia.

Amadeus, first Prince of Piedmont, died at Caselle, on the 29th of August, 1431, as he prepared to lead his father's troops in aid of the Emperor Sigismund, against the Venetians. Amadeus VIII. now deputed his second son, Louis, to rule in Italy as Prince of

Piedmont, and henceforth this title was invariably used to designate the hereditary Prince of Savoy.

The states of Savoy were, under Amadeus VIII., nearly doubled in extent, and acquired moreover a compactness never before attained.

The whole chain of the Alps was his, from the St. Gothard to the Mediterranean, with its declivities on both sides, with the single exception of Dauphiny, which was now, and had been since 1349, governed by a French prince, and began to be looked upon as an integral part of the territory of France.

Amadeus VIII., anxious to close that only gap in the great mountain-wall—for Saluzzo was by this time thoroughly subdued—made a last attempt upon the domains of the ancient foes of his family. He profited by the dissensions of the French princes of the blood, allied himself with Louis of Châlons, Prince of Orange, against the Duke of Bourbon, and, sure of the support of his brother-in-law, the Duke of Burgundy, he invaded Dauphiny.

But he met here with one of the few reverses in his long and fortunate career. He was routed under the walls of the castle of Anthon, on the Rhone, on Trinity Sunday, May, 1430, and owed his safety to his good steed, which bore him safe, though not without struggle and peril, across that rapid stream.

There was an ancient tradition, first treasured up by Guichenon*, that, on his coming in for the rights of his House on Piedmont, upon the demise of the last

* Guichenon, Royale Maison de Savoie, ii. 34.

Prince of Achaia, Amadeus VIII. allowed the cities and communities, which thus escheated to Savoy, a free choice between himself and any other prince they might affect, and that they all cheerfully declared in his favour.

The fact, as resting on no authentic evidence, has been treated with contempt by recent critics*. A mere formal declaration on his part of unwillingness to profit by any deed of usurpation of his predecessors, is, however, sufficiently in keeping with the fair and generous, no less than profound political character of Amadeus. Most of the possessions of Savoy in Piedmont, Chieri, Savigliano, Ivrea, Mondovì, Cuneo, and Nice, had come into her hands of their own free choice, though a choice in some instances dictated by necessity. The same causes which had determined their original dedition were still at work. The alternative between Savoy and any other prince was greatly in favour of the former: for Montferrat and Saluzzo were now too weak to afford protection, and Milan and France were too far and too well known for their contempt of their subjects' rights, too hopelessly a prey to intestine and foreign dissensions and wars.

Nor was that a favourable opportunity for the vindication of independent rights or attempts at local self-government.

Like all other countries, Lombardy was falling under the sway of a master. The re-action against the general dissolution of the feudal period was now rapidly

* Cibrario, Torino, i. 288.

approaching. Compact states were clustering together here and there—the embryos of future monarchies. In Italy the tendency to coalescence had been developed at an earlier period than elsewhere. Milan had swallowed up all the free cities of Lombardy: as a republic, or a signoria, or a duchy, that town was destined to be the head of a monarchy in Northern Italy. With a better fortune, or a longer life, or an uninterrupted succession, even such loathsome despots as the Visconti would have achieved it.

Amadeus VIII. perceived it, and, as we shall see, he aspired, if only for a moment, to the inheritance of Milan, and contemplated the union of all Northern Italy under his sceptre.

By the side of such monsters as abuse of freedom had brought into being throughout Italy—by the side of Visconti and Scala, of Este or Gonzaga, of the Popes of Avignon, or of the Anjou of Naples, that "feudal and semi-barbarous, but manly and simple and virtuous race of the Princes of Savoy—even though we may not hold them blameless of all deeds of fraud or violence*"—always appeared to advantage. That House, like those of Montferrat and Saluzzo, were all of Italian feudalism that still survived the stormy and sorrowful, however glorious, period of municipal freedom. Their authority had something of the *prestige* always attached to high birth and time-honoured descent. The throne was not, as invariably at Milan and Verona, the price of dark trea-

* Balbo, Storia d' Italia, p. 203.

chery or of startling domestic tragedies, nor was it grounded on the utter demolition of the very forms of popular freedom. It was therefore natural that, upon the inevitable extinction of municipalism, the people should look up to the chief and representative of feudalism—should look up to Amadeus VIII. for a cessation of anarchy, and of its attendant evil, tyranny.

Master by this time of a tolerably united territory, Amadeus proceeded to give it something like uniformity and centralization.

On the 17th of June, 1430, he published at Chambéry his Code of Laws, "Statuta Sabaudiæ," in five books*.

Attempts at general legislation had been made by other princes of this House, and, what may seem remarkable, by those very princes who displayed the most brilliant chivalrous spirit, and were most constantly engaged in warlike enterprises.

Peter II., the "Little Charlemagne," promulgated his statutes "with the goodwill and consent of the nobles and ignobles of the counties of Savoy and Burgundy†," and appointed bailiffs and judges in Savoy, Genevois, Chablais, and Vaud.

Amadeus VI., the "Red Count," introduced important reforms: he either entirely claims, or only perhaps shares with Peter II. himself, the glory of an

* Decreta Sabaudiæ Ducalia, tam vetera quam nova, etc., Turin, 1477.

† Statuts de Pierre de Savoie, Mémoires et Documens de la Société d'Histoire de la Suisse Romande, vol. i.

institution so obviously dictated by the best feelings of righteousness and humanity, that of the "Avocat des Pauvres," by which summary justice was placed within reach of the humblest subject, free of expense*.

The provinces and districts originally placed under the sway of Savoy had at no time been destitute of some clumsy organization.

They had been divided into bailiwicks and chatellanies; and in the times of Aymon (1329–1343) the whole State consisted of six bailiwicks, west and north of the Alps, and two south of those mountains, exclusive of the dominions of the Barons of Vaud and of the Princes of Achaia.

Analogous arrangements had been made by these latter princes within their more limited and often-shifting Subalpine territories. The counties of Nice and Piedmont, under the House of Anjou, were governed by a seneschal, and by vicars and chatelains under him. Similar offices were likewise appointed in the states of Saluzzo and Montferrat: all these were both civil and military governors, equally trusted with the defence of fortresses, and with the administration of justice.

In Savoy we find also, at a very early period, the embryo of a central government.

Resident with the Count, or rather, obliged to wander about in his suite, there was a Council of State which also fulfilled the functions of a supreme tribunal.

* Cibrario, Studi Storici, i. 384.—Vulliemin, Chillon, p. 85.

Under Edward (1323–1329) the offices of this important body were divided; a permanent council, or supreme court of justice, was established at Chambéry, whilst the Count continued to move about, attended by his own Council of State.

The functions of these two councils were more clearly defined by Amadeus VI. (1343–1383), who also raised his chancellor to the office of supreme judge and keeper of the seals, and issued new regulations for his "Chambre des Comptes," or Chancery of the Exchequer.

In all these matters the Green Count was rather a reformer than a creator; for a chancellor, Richard, already appears under Humbert III. in 1150; and the regular series of these officers begins with Edward in 1323. The Chambre des Comptes existed in 1267, and it was by mistake that Guichenon dated its institution from 1351*.

But Amadeus VIII. effected innovation and improvement on a larger scale.

He had not only to provide for the wants of a vast multitude of new subjects, but he had brought his subjects, both new and old, under more absolute control. Something like equitable jurisdiction and general administration was now practicable, and his statutes met with but little opposition, and were accepted as the law of the land. The repeated grants of the Em-

* Galli, Cariche del Piemonte.—Capré, Traité Historique de la Chambre des Comptes de Savoie, p. 9.—Sclopis, Antica Legislazione del Piemonte, p. 288.

perors in favour of the House of Savoy, had done away with the "immediatcy" of the feudal aristocracy,—that "immediatcy" by which they claimed exemption from all jurisdiction, save only from that of the Empire, on which they "immediately" depended. The courts of Savoy were now supreme, utterly free from all subjection to the Imperial Chamber. Vassal was daily becoming synonymous with subject. The last great feudatories of the provinces of Ivrea and Vercelli, the Marchional Houses of Ceva and Del Carretto, indeed, as we have seen, even Montferrat and Saluzzo had, under Amadeus VIII., been made to bow the knee. Feudalism was virtually at an end. Henceforth the nobility could still be formidable as a body: they could still by their factions agitate the court of a weak monarch, but individually, no rebel lord could any longer brave the wrath of his sovereign. We have seen the more powerful barons of Vaud, the Grandsons, Cossonays, etc., crushed by a variety of means: the Piedmontese nobles, the Provana, Piossasco, etc., had already suffered much under the Princes of Achaia, who mowed them down both with the sword and with the axe.

Amadeus VIII. further weakened the whole order by adding to their number. He availed himself of his own elevation to the ducal rank, to lavish diplomas upon upstart counts and barons. He surrounded himself with a stately household; and the feudal aristocracy was thus tamed down into a courtly nobility.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the cities

also were by this time weary of freedom,—ashamed at the results of their experiment of self-government. Exhausted and bleeding, they came, one by one, into the hands of Savoy. All of them had free charters and statutes, in some instances the spontaneous growth of their own popular life, but, more generally, the grant of the princes themselves. We have seen the House of Savoy, since the time of Thomas I., and even of Amadeus III., winning golden opinions as promoters of free municipal institutions. Each of those communities stipulated for the maintenance of their peculiar liberties; each of them added new compacts at the time of their ultimate dedition. They soon, however, became aware that the times were altered. They were glad enough to surrender their stormy freedom in exchange for equal justice and security: of their boasted franchises, exemptions, and privileges, little more than the names and forms were preserved.

For the rest, this momentous revolution was not limited to the states of Savoy. Local government was at an end all over Europe. The fifteenth century witnessed the rise of great monarchies. What Amadeus VIII. attempted in the early part of that age in Savoy, Louis XI. accomplished in France ere its close.

A very powerful means of amalgamation presented itself to the legislator, in the lately renewed institution of the States-General.

The first convocation of the "Three Estates" in France took place, as is universally known, under Philip the Fair, in 1303.

The historians of Savoy were long anxious to secure for their country the honour of priority in such institutions. But no actual mention of "States" occurs in Savoy before the beginning of the fourteenth century, or in Piedmont before the middle of that period*. Yet there is, without dispute, evidence of appeals to national representation at very early periods; and it is plausibly supposed that Peter II. introduced the custom of similar assemblies, in imitation of what he had seen during his long sojourn in England. His statutes, as we have seen, were drawn up "de voluntate et consensu nobilium, innobilium comitatûs Sabaudiæ et Burgundiæ" (by "Burgundy," the Pays de Vaud was meant). National representation had only ceased in Europe at the dispersion of nations; but it continued nevertheless, we should think, in a fragmentary state throughout its darkest periods, and its re-establishment was a necessary consequence of the new coalescence of states, and kept pace with it. No trace of absolutism, we may venture to say, is perceptible in the Middle Ages†.

Thus the question of the succession of Savoy was said to have been referred to the "States" at the accession of Peter II. (1263), of Philip (1268), and of Amadeus V. (1285). But there is more probability of an assembly of that nature being held on the death of Edward in 1329, when the pretensions of his daughter, the Duchess of Brittany, were set aside, and

* Sclopis, Stati Generali del Piemonte e della Savoia, p. 19.

† Guizot, Civilization in Europe, Lecture x., p. 192.

Edward's brother Aymon was called to the throne. The whole of that transaction, as we have seen, rests on no positive proof; and we must take it upon the vague though unanimous testimony of the old chroniclers of Savoy, who wrote at least a hundred years after the event. It would be rash to assert that the meeting in question was a real assembly of the States, of the nature of those which were already held in France; but we really incline to think that, in these matters, the minor States and Provinces led the way, inasmuch as the gathering together of their representatives could always be more easy and prompt, and because organization, which had wholly ceased in the great political bodies, had, to some extent, continued in their members.

We are, at any rate, willing to abide by the conclusion of a writer* who gave the subject his particular attention, and who nevertheless accepts the assertion of the Savoy chroniclers, as in itself probable, and impugned by no other authority.

We have clearer accounts of such matters south of the Alps.

The people of Piedmont were, if not consulted, at least apprised, through their deputies, of the change that was to take place in their destinies. On the 24th of May, 1286, the chatelains, nobles and ambassadors of the towns of Piedmont, Val di Susa, of Turin, Moncalieri, Carignano, etc., twelve deputies for the nobility and twenty-nine legates for the towns, all of whom

* Sclopis, Stati Generali, p. 42.

are known by name*, met on the meadows of Giaveno, on the banks of the Sangone, between Susa and Pinerolo; and it was there intimated to them that Louis of Savoy, Baron of Vaud, and Guie of Burgundy, widow of Thomas III., for herself and her sons, had surrendered their rights to Amadeus V.; and that to the latter, therefore, the assembled notables owed their fealty and homage.

We may be told that these States, or "Comitia," of Giaveno, were not dealt with as a deliberative body; but surely the Count would hardly have brought them together for the mere purpose of signifying to them his good pleasure, if he could altogether have dispensed with them. Allusion to similar meetings of the States of Piedmont occurs during the whole period of the domination of the Princes of Achaia, though no detailed report of their deliberations has been preserved†, probably because the country fell subsequently into the hands of rulers interested in the destruction of the very traces of its ancient liberties.

Recourse to the same engine of state was had, in great emergencies, in the Marquisates of Montferrat and Saluzzo.

In Montferrat, on the death of John I., the last of the House of Aleramo, the nobles and deputies of the commons met at Trino, on the 9th of March, 1305, and there, complying with the testamentary dispositions of their late lord, they resolved upon sending messengers to tender the crown to one of the sons of

* Datta, Principi d'Acaia, i. 19; Documenti, ii. 20. † Datta, i. 94.

Yolande, Violante, or Irene, sister of the deceased and wife of the Emperor Andronicus the elder of Constantinople*. The assembly gave in this instance no slight token of its independence, as they had been convoked by order of Manfred IV., Marquis of Saluzzo, regent of their Marquisate, whose pretensions to Montferrat were no mystery, and who lacked neither the will nor the power to make them good; and yet they dared to pronounce against him, and in favour of a distant, unknown, and unconscious claimant, merely in obedience to a sense of loyalty and justice.

The States of Montferrat were frequently called together under the Palæologi.

They assumed a lofty tone of authority especially in 1376, when, on the 3rd of January, after the death of Secondotto, they were summoned at Moncalvo to do homage to his brother John III., then a minor, under the guardianship of Otho of Brunswick. They freely stated that the deceased young Marquis had been guilty of the most flagitious excesses, and they therefore made their allegiance conditional upon a better behaviour on the part of his successor, protesting, with a reservation analogous to the alleged "Y, si no, no!" of the Aragonese, that the recurrence of such outrages as had disgraced the previous reign, would render null and void the oath that was demanded of them†. At this same juncture the States were consulted as to the claims urged by Amadeus VI. Count

* Irici Tridinens. Rer. Patr. p. 107.

† Moriundi, Monument. Aquens. i. 368.

of Savoy, on Chivasso and other towns, and voted subsidies for the war that was about to be waged against Milan.

The elements of national representation were, therefore, everywhere at hand; and it was easy for Amadeus VIII. and his successors to turn them to the best advantage, to carry, by their assent, some great measure of general government, and to neutralize the influence of the various orders of society by setting them in opposition one against another.

The functions and attributes of the States of Savoy were never clearly defined. They never became a constituted power: they did not meet at stated and regular times, but were only convened by the Prince at his own good pleasure: all their repeated efforts in subsequent times, all their solicitations for a periodical convocation, proved unavailing. They were not looked upon as a legislative body, though we have instances of edicts enacted by their advice as early as 1437. No mention of the States is made in the promulgation of the statutes of Amadeus VIII. in 1430: the Duke merely affirms that he had "heard the opinion of his council." Fifteen years later, when the Duke Louis solemnly pledged himself to maintain the inalienability of the domains of his house, by a deed signed in the presence of his father, then Pope Felix V., in the Dominican convent without the walls of Geneva, April 22, 1445, that most important transaction seems also to have been made without the intervention of the States.

They had, however, the great nerve of the country in their hands. They voted extraordinary subsidies as early as 1356 and 1359, and the Prince, whose revenue arose chiefly from land, and could levy no ordinary taxes, must needs compound with the States, whenever he was hard-pressed for money. It is needless to say what influence accrued to them from this simple circumstance. All questions of great moment, the marriage of a Prince, the appointment of a regency, or guardianship of a minor, the election of a chancellor and other great officers, were usually, though not necessarily, referred to them.

Their voice on such matters was not, indeed, paramount: for, in 1393, they declared against the union of Amadeus VIII., then a minor, aged ten, with Mary of Burgundy, and the marriage took place, seven years later, notwithstanding. Still they were the organs of public opinion; and moral ascendancy, whenever they met, gave them perhaps as much strength as might have resulted from chartered rights.

Amadeus VIII., a prince of great energy and strength of will, did not often need the support or advice of the States of Savoy; but in calamitous times, under his successors, the States stood forth conspicuous, and made up by their wisdom for the deficiencies of their rulers.

But in this great work of centralization which began under Amadeus VIII., the prince soon became aware that he was at the head of two nations, and that he needed two centres.

At the time that his son, Amadeus, took up the reins of government in Piedmont, a council was created south of the Alps, on the model of the one sitting at Chambéry. This new council was probably first established in 1424, at Pinerolo, where Prince Amadeus resided: it was then removed to Turin, hence to Moncalieri, but became at last permanent in Turin about 1459, when that city may be looked upon as the real capital of the possessions of Savoy in Italy. In the same manner the Chambre des Comptes and other institutions had to be doubled at subsequent periods. The breach between the two nations became every day more apparent; nor was it long (1493) before the Italian subjects of Savoy claimed to have a share in the regency, and insisted that the young Prince, Charles John Amadeus (the sixth Duke), who came to the throne in his ninth month, should be brought up amongst them.

Beside these two great eternal divisions, there were other provincial peculiarities which required great management and gave rise to no ordinary difficulties.

In Burgundian lands the "Patrie de Vaud" possessed privileges apart from the "Patrie de Savoie." In Lombard countries the "Patria Vetus," or original "Principatus Pedemontium," had rights and prerogatives different from those of the "Terra Nova," or recent acquisitions of Vercelli, Nice, etc. The Barony of Vaud and the Duchy of Aosta, especially, clung to their original organization. Although they sent deputies to the States-General of Savoy, they had, how-

ever, their own provincial assemblies of very ancient origin, with annual or otherwise periodical meetings. Aosta had its "Pari, Impari," etc., distinct orders of nobility, gentry, and commonalty. Both Aosta and Vaud protested against the enactment of the statutes of Amadeus VIII., and would obey no other laws than their own old customs and usages. But Amadeus was not a man to be easily thwarted in his designs. He pointed to the clause, according to which his code of laws professed to respect "the good and praiseworthy customs" of Aosta and Vaud, no less than the "wise statutes" of the towns of Italy, Piedmont, and Provence submitted to his sceptre, and the code was uniformly adopted*.

Aosta and Vaud continued nevertheless in the enjoyment of local liberties, and especially of local legislative assemblies, long after similar institutions had, in other provinces, been trodden down by the iron heel of despotism. In Vaud these liberties were only utterly crushed, when that country, after repeated invasions, came at last into the power of the overbearing aristocracy of Bern, in 1536; but Aosta was spared to the last by the Dukes of Savoy, and some traces of her ancient freedom were still perceptible in that secluded region at the time of the French revolution of 1789†.

We shall enter into no particulars respecting the statutes of Amadeus VIII. Perhaps the greatest re-

* Sclopis, Legislazione del Piemonte, p. 121. — Cibrario, Stud Storici, ii. 383.

† Sclopis, Stati Generali, pp. 387-394.

volution effected, or at least aimed at, by that wise prince, was the withdrawal of justice from the hands of nobles and warriors, who had hitherto monopolized it, and the creation of a judicial order.

He set up lawyers to frame and administer the laws. The offices of chancellor, president and members of councils, and, to a certain extent, those of bailiffs and chatelains, were awarded in consideration of legal attainments. Law-lords sat by the side of peers by descent, and the gown became as sure a road to distinction as the sword. He appointed judges to each of the seven Transalpine provinces, and, in Piedmont, one to every town of note. He held, yearly, a "Supreme General Audience," or court of appeal, a kind of Champs-de-Mai, in the open air, for the revision of judgments issued by local courts, or even by the councils themselves.

The effect of all these measures may be judged of from the fact that, in the times of Amadeus VIII., "Justice de Savoie" was a proverbial expression synonymous with prompt and fair justice*.

On one subject however the statutes of Amadeus VIII. may be said to have been not too greatly in advance of his age.

The first of the five books in which his code is divided, is entirely devoted to religious topics. It contains minute and rather severe enactments against heretics and blasphemers, against conjurors, etc. The

* Vulliemin, Le Chroniqueur, Journal de l'Helvétie Romande, in 1535, 1536, p. 9.

soundness and purity of the Catholic dogma was a matter of the utmost importance to Amadeus, who was deeply imbued with the earnest but somewhat narrow piety which characterized his whole race, and who was besides greatly concerned for the schism which distracted the Church, and the consequent progress of the Hussite and other sects of his times.

He prescribed limits to the toleration of the Jews, who, owing to the frequent necessities of the Princes of Savoy, especially under the "liberal" Edward, had not only been allowed to reside in Savoy, but had all but been invited to settle there at the time of their expulsion from larger states. Amadeus now shut them up in their "Ghetto," or Jewry, compelled them to wear a badge, forbade them from appearing abroad during the ceremonies of Passion-week (from a charitable wish, as one would fain believe, to screen them from the outrages of the populace), issued new and more stringent laws against usury, their besetting sin; and finally had the books in their synagogues thoroughly examined, appointing two renegades from their own faith for that purpose, to expunge not only aught those books might contain blasphemous or disrespectful to the dominant religion of the state, but also anything which might have Talmudic or other sectarian tendencies—anything that might be deemed less strictly in keeping with the pure original Mosaic law,—so anxious was that good Prince for unity and orthodoxy of faith, even amongst those of his subjects whom he stigmatized as unbelievers!

In later times, under Charles III., the ninth Duke of Savoy, in 1551, the Jews were allowed a "conservator," or judge and magistrate of their own.

It has been a frequent subject of self-gratulation with Piedmontese writers, that the people of their country have at all times evinced an earnest and consistent zeal for the faith of their fathers—the Roman Catholic faith.

It may be worth while to inquire to what extent their orthodoxy was the result of the influence of their rulers.

But in the meanwhile, it must not be denied that deep feelings of veneration, easily pervertible into superstition, have been found at all times prevalent in the Alpine valleys—particularly in Savoy.

Indeed, it may be desirable, from the outset, to draw a line of demarcation between the Italian and the French people subject to the same sceptre of Savoy; as the different tendency of mind of both nations is exhibiting the most striking contrasts, even at the present day, in the Sardinian Parliament.

And first, as to the rulers.

We have already alluded to the peculiar tendency of the Princes of Savoy, of all ages, toward religious retirement. That they peopled the valleys and the very summits of the Alps with splendid monastic establishments, and bade the fattest plains of Piedmont minister to their wants, need scarcely be quoted as a peculiar instance of their piety, since the foundation or endowment of religious houses, the building

of churches, chapels, or sanctuaries, are equally numbered among the achievements of royal and lordly munificence throughout the world.

Heirs to the piety of the Kings of Burgundy on the one side, and to the liberality of the Marquises of Italy on the other, the princes of Savoy found equally north and south of the Alps but too numerous objects on which to bestow their bounties.

Still the existing fraternities did not suffice them; —not the magnificent monastery of St. Maurice d'Agaune, nor its hundred colonies, priories, canonries, monasteries, and nunneries, which crowded every town and village, every corner in the valleys of the Alps on the Burgundian side, where every new order and rule—Cistercian, Carthusian, Dominican, and Franciscan—so throve in succession, that no less than forty-seven brotherhoods and twenty-six sisterhoods were suppressed by the French in 1793, in that poor Duchy of Savoy alone*.

All this, we repeat, did not satisfy the zeal of the Princes of Savoy. For several centuries every reigning count aspired to the glory of a founder of religious houses. Humbert I. at Bourget, Humbert II. at Aulps in Chablais, Amadeus III. at St. Sulpice in Bugey, left monuments of their pious munificence. The same Amadeus laid, in 1225, the first stone of Hautecombe, on the Lake of Bourget, upon a ledge of the dreary Mont du Chat, away from which—or

* Grillet, Dictionnaire Historique du Mont-Blanc et du Léman, i. 138.

away from the other solitude of Aulps—his saintly son Humbert III. seemed hardly able to breathe.

The same Humbert III. and Thomas I. (the latter, however, a prince of more enterprising genius and more taken up with worldly concerns) were no less earnest in the foundation of religious establishments; nor were the emulous neighbours of Savoy behindhand in such pious deeds. Not only the princely families of Faucigny, Dauphiny, Genevois, etc., but even the lordly houses in Savoy, the De la Chambre in Maurienne, the Briançons in Tarentaise, the Challant in Aosta, and a hundred others in Bresse, Bugey, and Vaud, all aspired to hallow the countries with religious communities thriving under their auspices.

The very glaciers of Chamouny did not escape their enthusiasm, for there, as early as 1090, the Counts of Geneva had established a priory in the very bosom of Mont Blanc, at a spot, the awful silence of which gay tourists hardly thought of disturbing at that period.

South of the Alps, besides Bobbio on the Apennines, and St. Dalmazzo in Val di Stura, and the Novalaise in the heart of Mont Cenis, and the glorious pile of St. Michael della Chiusa, reared on a precipice like a hawk's nest, and rather carved in, than built on, the rock (and which, in 1202, already possessed Giaveno, St. Ambrogio, and the best part of Val di Susa, with no less than one hundred and forty churches, and several rich abbeys and priories both in France and Italy*), besides San Benigno di Fruttuaria, in Cana-

* Della Chiesa, Corona Reale di Savoia, ii. 386.—Provana, Dis-

vese, and the Abbeys of Lucedio and Tilieto, which owed their increment to the House of Montferrat; and those of Staffarda and Casanova, which throve under the patronage of Saluzzo; every town, no matter how otherwise unimportant, was the seat of some monastic establishment, gorgeous edifices rising conspicuous either in their busiest streets or close upon their walls at their gates.

Piedmont was still divided into nearly the same dioceses as it had been at the first establishment of Christianity in the first, second, third, and fourth centuries. Only Bobbio had been erected into a bishopric in 1014; Alessandria had been made into a diocese at its foundation, in 1175; and Mondovì had been raised to the same distinction in 1388. The monks were, at this particular period, the object of popular enthusiasm; and there was this peculiarity in the monks of Piedmont and Italy, that they seemed to have caught the gregarious and urban spirit of the people. Their cenobiums in the Alpine fastnesses were rapidly depopulated; even the Novalaise became little more than a ruin, although monks bearing the name of that austere order lived in pampered ease and indulgence in more genial quarters.

The Alps were not however utterly forsaken. Contemporaneous with the very rise of the House of Savoy, there flourished a saint of the noble House of Menthon, in Genevois, by name Bernard, Archdeacon

sertazione sopra alcuni Scrittori del Monastero di San Michele della Chiusa, etc.—Memorie della R. Academia di Torino, ii. Serie II.

of Aosta, sometimes styled "the Apostle of the Alps." It is not to him, indeed, that we owe the hospices which afterwards went by his name. An hospital, "Montis Jovis," and another, "Columnæ Jovis," existed long before his time; and one Hartmann was almsgiver to the hospice of Mons Jovis, in 851, when he was promoted to the Bishopric of Lausanne. An hospice on Mont Cenis is likewise mentioned in the times of Louis the Pious, in the early part of the ninth century.

What we owe to Bernard is merely the establishment of religious fraternities which were to take care of those houses of refuge. Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, indeed, those two hospices continued to bear their old classical appellation, and it was only towards the end of the latter age, that devotion to the Saint conferred his name upon the Passes of the "Great and Little St. Bernard." Bernard of Menthon was born in 923, and died in 1008. The foundation of the Alpine monasteries belongs in all probability to the year 970*.

The House of Savoy, in whose dominions those mountain-passes lay, on both sides, were at all times liberal of their support to the monks.

We read of one instance, in which the Provost of the Hospice of Mons Jovis, or Great St. Bernard, laid before Edward of Savoy and his council assembled at Chillon, in February, 1324, a complaint against the Chatelain of Evian, who attempted to deprive the

* Durandi, Alpi Graie e Pennine, pp. 16, 48.

monastery of the right of supreme jurisdiction over some of their lands: for even these holy men, with a home perched up in a wilderness above the level of perpetual snow, and members of an order entirely consecrated to deeds of active charity and benevolence, were yet loth to relinquish that dread privilege of feudal power, the right of the gallows; and we read that the council at Chillon pronounced in their favour, and the gibbet rose triumphant by the side of the cross, all over the domains of St. Bernard*.

But the Alps boasted other religious foundations, springing more immediately from the piety of the people.

It was a peculiar and a beautiful fancy of the Celtic and Ligurian tribes to hallow the solitude of the mountains with their tutelar deities; and the Romans acted with their wonted wisdom when they substituted their Jupiter Penninus for the "Pen" of the Alpine tribes, whose pure and natural worship they wished to perpetuate. Christianity evinced the same degree of discretion and forbearance: St. Maurice for several centuries, and after him St. Bernard, took the place both of Pen and of Jupiter. At least two-score sanctuaries, chiefly dedicated to those saints, studded the mountains of Piedmont†.

That of our Lady of Oropa, above Biella, now a palace, with accommodation for three thousand pilgrims, is perhaps the oldest. It is supposed to date

* Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, iii. 5.

† Paroletti, Descrizione dei Santuarii del Piemonte.

from the fourth century, though no mention of it occurs before the year 1184. It was Eusebius, Bishop of Vercelli, who conveyed there a black Madonna, carved by no less illustrious an artist than the apostle Luke, hiding it from the fury of the Arians or Iconoclasts, then rife in his diocese. Another similar wooden image was by him deposited at Crea, near Moncalvo, in Montferrat, and a third in his native place, Cagliari, in Sardinia.

The sanctuary of Crea above mentioned, no less than Belmonte in Canavese, and St. Andrew's of Turin, are attributed to King Arduino, in his last year of retirement and penitence in 1016.

Those quaint but sometimes splendid clusters of Chapels, or "Calvaries," more peculiar to the diocese of Novara, such as the "Holy Mount" or "New Jerusalem" of Varallo, those of Orta and Domo d' Ossola, and that of Graglia in the mountains of Biella, are of more recent construction.

Varallo owed its rise to the piety of a Milanese nobleman, Bernardin Caimo, in 1486: it boasts now more than fifty-six chapels, and tasked for many years the ingenuity of the native Alpine artists. The very fine church, now rising on the Isle of St. Giulio, Lake of Orta, is said to stand on the site of the ancient oratory built there by the Saint who gave the island his name; who landed there after crossing the lake on his cloak; and rid the spot of the hideous reptiles which rendered it uninhabitable. St. Giulio flourished in the fourth century.

Most assuredly this local devotion, this worship of idols for the sake of the spots hallowed by them, is characteristic of all mountaineers, and forms part of their patriotism. It is God himself that speaks to them from those haunted solitudes; the little white shrines dotting here and there the long unbroken line of the brown mountain-range, would seem reared up by nature herself, the spontaneous growth of the region.

Yet, with all this highland feeling of veneration, the Piedmontese evinced in the Middle Ages considerable independence of religious opinion, and, like all the rest of the Italians, they were, during the whole of that dark period, no bigots.

Traces of Arianism lingered in these districts, especially in the province of Vercelli; whence, we are obscurely informed, the first Bishop, Eusebius, had never been able to drive them, and where, in the tenth century, they joined the Hungarians in their inroad, and rose against the tyranny of their priesthood, even to the utter extermination of them*.

The diocese of Turin was, towards the year 815, as we have seen, in the keeping of an enlightened pastor, Claudius (a Spaniard by birth, and court-chaplain of the Emperor Louis the Pious), one of the most zealous opposers of the worship of images, of prayers for the dead, of processions and pilgrimages, whose influence was never, perhaps, entirely lost in some of the mountain-districts subject to his see.

* Irici Tridinens. Rer. Patr. p. 15.

Another bishop, Cunibert, on the same spot in 1046, warred with Rome on the subject of the marriage of priests, and had, besides his own metropolitan, the Primate of Milan, also the bishops of Vercelli, Novara, Asti and Alba,—in short, the whole of Piedmont,—with him*. In this contest, of such vital importance both to the Church and country, which, as we had occasion to state, agitated North Italy for half a century, and was chiefly instrumental in its regeneration, the Piedmontese bishops and their clergy deserved the respect of their very opponents, as St. Peter Damiani, the legate or apostle of Gregory VII., who was sent to combat them, and won over the pious Countess Adelaide of Turin to his views, was fain to do justice to the learning and piety of those "concubinarian" priests, whose breach of discipline he merely attributed to error of judgment.

It seems clear to us that at these very earliest epochs, all dissent from Rome, whether consisting in opposition to her worship of images, or to the celibacy of the priesthood, was set down to the score of "Arianism:" but in later times, for that odious appellation other still more obnoxious denominations were substituted.

Sects of more daring heretics, the "Paterini" and "Cathari," supposed to have connection with the "Albigenses" of Languedoc, and to have with them a common origin from the "Paulicians" of the East, are met with in Piedmont earlier than anywhere else in Italy.

* Meyranesii Pedemontium Sacrum, p. 180.

Heribert, Archbishop of Milan, detected a sect of this description at the castle of Monforte, in the Langhe, district of Alba, in 1034, where it had gained men of noble Lombard descent; among them the Countess, or feudal lady of the castle. Heribert, with the aid of Odelric Manfred, Marquis of Turin, and of his brother Alric, Bishop of Asti, took those dissenters prisoners, and conveyed them to Milan, where they fell victims to the zeal of some fanatics, against the will of the Archbishop himself*. Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, similar sects were rife in the country, especially in the highlands of Novara and Vercelli, where they allied themselves with the Biandrate and other discomfited Ghibelines, and mixing up religious dissent with political opposition, they ravaged the lands of the two dioceses, which were then strongly attached to the Guelph or Papal party. Against their incursions, we are told†, the city of Vercelli built the town and fortress of Serravalle, at the entrance of Val Sesia, in 1251.

It was on this same stage that Fra Dolcino, a native of those districts, made his appearance at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

The sect, of which he then took the lead, had originated at Parma, towards 1260, with a moon-struck enthusiast, by name Gherardo Sagarelli, who seems indeed to have had nothing whatever in common with the Manicheans, among whom he has been numbered,

* Terraneo, Adelaide Illustrata, ii. 205.

† Durandi, Antica Condizione del Vercellese, p. 112.

but was only a Franciscan run mad. In common with very numerous evangelical sects of the period, mostly sprung from dissenters of the mendicant fraternities, Sagarelli's brotherhood aimed at a reform of the Church by bringing it back to its original poverty and humility. These sectarians called themselves "apostles," because they prided themselves on conforming to the strictest asceticism of apostolic life.

Sagarelli suffered at Parma in 1300, and Dolcino, a man of high gifts of eloquence, genius and daring, and harbouring perhaps some great political aim, was placed at the head of the sect. After various and strange vicissitudes, driven from land to land, and made the object of heinous as well as absurd accusations, he fell back on his native mountains of Vercelli and Novara, and at the head of 3000 to 6000 followers, took up a strong position, first in Val Sesia, then in the mountains of Biella, and there held his ground against the forces of the bishops and people of both dioceses, and against many of their auxiliaries, whom the Bulls of Clement V. had armed for a crusade against him. After a most epic resistance of above two years, Dolcino was reduced by famine, and perished in the flames at Vercelli, on the 1st of June, 1307, together with a beautiful woman, named Margaret of Trent, the devoted sharer of his fortunes*.

But the name of Piedmont is more intimately associated with another, purer and more interesting religious sect, endowed with greater vitality, that of the

* Mariotti, Fra Dolcino and his Times.

"Primitive Christians of the valleys of the Alps," or Waldenses.

Their name and origin have been matters of endless controversy. Their own theory is that their church is a primitive one: that it was part of the so-called "Diocese of Italy" (Lombardy and Piedmont) at the time that the latter, with its centre at Milan, was independent of the See of Rome, resisted its encroachments and innovations, and had bishops—such as Claude of Turin—who upheld the standard of uncorrupt Christianity*.

When political circumstances subjected the Italian diocese to Rome, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the humble churches of the Alps, forgotten or ignored, continued true to their ancient purity and simplicity, without attracting the notice, or calling down upon themselves the rigours, of the Papal Court.

This applies, not merely to the upper districts of the Chiusone and Pellice, to those Valleys of Lucerna, Angrogna and Rora, which constitute the head-quarters of the Waldenses in modern times, but also to some districts in Val di Susa, Val di Vraita, and Val di Stura, where the same ideas were for a long time entertained.

These single-minded people were, in spite of themselves, mixed up with the various sects which arose in France and Italy at different periods; as the persecuted members of such fraternities came to them

* La Buona Novella, Giornale Religioso, No. 17–35.—Bert, I Valdesi.—Charvaz, Origine des Vaudois.

for shelter, and met with support and sympathy. In that sense, and from such causes, it is indeed possible that they either actually adopted, or were suspected or maliciously accused of adopting, the doctrines of those various herctics. They were especially confounded with the disciples of Peter Waldo, or "Poor Men of Lyons," with whom they had a common name.

The appellation of Waldensis, Valdensis, or Vallensis, seems however to have been known previous to the existence of Waldo of Lyons; and it is even presumed that this latter, instead of giving his name to the Christians of the Alps, rather took it from them, —that when he withdrew from the world, distributed his property among the poor, and resolved to live according to the Gospel, the epithet of "Waldo" was by his fellow-citizens added to his name, Peter, to distinguished him as a convert to the religion of the simple men of the valleys*. When Waldo's own sect spread at Lyons and throughout southern France, towards 1180, it was, either from choice or necessity, thrown together with the Albigenses of Languedoc, with the Cathari of Italy, etc., supposed to share some of their doctrines, and involved in their fate. Similarity of name and analogy of belief then at last turned the attention of persecutors against that peaceful mountain-district, which thus stood forth as the very nest of error; and this became, in its turn, the object of persecution.

* Muston, L'Israël des Alpes, ch. i.

Notwithstanding an imperial decree of Otho IV. (1209), by which James, bishop of Turin, is directed to clear his diocese of Waldenses and other heretics, and an edict of the magistrates of Pinerolo (1220), forbidding the people of their town and territory from harbouring the Waldenses, it is admitted, even by the martyrologists of the Waldensian Churches*, that their abodes continued unmolested to the beginning of the fifteenth century.

An onset was made upon them by an Inquisitor, Borelli, in 1400; but from that epoch to 1487, it seems that persecution was limited to the harsh treatment of those sectarians who showed themselves out of their own territory, to which there was an early determination to confine them.

In the latter year, Pope Innocent VIII. proceeded more deliberately against them. He empowered his legate, Albert de Capitaneis, to carry destruction into their valleys, and enjoined on Charles VIII. of France, and on Charles I., the fifth duke of Savoy, to lend the inquisitors the aid of their carnal weapons. The Waldenses of Saluzzo and Dauphiny, subjects of France, were nearly exterminated. Those of the valleys of Pinerolo suffered most dreadfully also, but they made a stand, especially at Pra del Tor, a narrow mountain-gorge at the head of Val d'Angrogna, a spot for ever memorable in the annals of that brave people. Their heroism won the admiration of Charles I. of Savoy, himself a young prince of great spirit, who came

* Bert, I Valdesi, p. 110.

to terms with those unhappy subjects, declared that he had been led into error, not only as to their doctrines, but even as to their personal appearance, (so that he was surprised to see they were no Cyclopes, armed with four rows of teeth, etc.) and ended by granting them an edict of toleration, which, at least within certain limits, screened them from harm for half a century—until, that is, they were charged with complicity with the innovators of the age of Luther and Calvin*.

We have thus briefly dismissed a subject which constitutes no trifling part of our task, because its real interest begins at a later period, when the sufferings of the Waldenses and their exploits stand forth with greater evidence, and their memorials can be more positively authenticated. In the meanwhile it is important to observe that the House of Savoy did not, in these early times, display any particular harshness against them, but rather tempered the severity of papal and imperial decrees. The Waldenses on either side of the Alps were not all subjects of Savoy: those of Saluzzo, Dauphiny, and Provence, were, either directly or indirectly, under the sway of France, and it was by that power—by that "eldest daughter of the Church"—that the first and heaviest blows were dealt.

Notwithstanding the deep obscurity involving the records of those times, it strikes us that a line of demarcation was always drawn between the original

* Bert, I Valdesi, p. 117.

Waldenses, or men of the Alps, who kept up their primitive religion, unconscious of offence, and the Waldenses of Lyons and of the south of France, who came up to them at later periods, tainted—or supposed to be tainted—with Albigensian and other heresies; so that the Papal edicts and other hostile measures were at first merely aimed at these latter, whilst there always existed, at least among the rulers of Piedmont, a desire to spare the former, so long as they shunned intercourse with other sectarians, and consented to abide within their own valleys.

It is also important to observe that the bulk of the Waldensian population of the present time is decidedly Italian, or Piedmontese, and that their dialect, however mixed, like that of all the other valleys of the Alps, exhibits the most unmistakable Italian roots. We say this, because their church service and liturgy, as well as their educational and social institutions, have, for the last two centuries, been exclusively French; and this circumstance has given their manners, in the upper classes, a peculiar Transalpine tone, which however does not go very deep below the surface. Persecution, emigration, and pestilence, at different periods mowed down their native "Barbe," or religious ministers and teachers, and their ranks were filled up by Protestant clergymen, French or Swiss by birth; whilst the natives themselves almost invariably repaired to Geneva or Lausanne for their education. By these means the French was, in the course of the seventeenth century, substituted for the Italian ritual,

and the former language gradually superseded the latter as a medium of learning and civilization. All this is now being rapidly undone; a new generation of young pastors is springing up, who have been obliged to pursue part of their studies at some of the Tuscan universities, who show great zeal in the vindication of the Italian character of their people, and strive, by an astonishingly rapid reaction, to re-nationalize their Church.

For the rest, the Piedmontese people and their rulers were, in early times, no priest-ridden race.

The cities of Western Lombardy, especially Asti and Vercelli, were the last to bow to the inquisitorial edicts of Otho IV. and Frederic II. The heretic-burners only made their appearance in the former city in 1254, twenty-one years after the proud Milan had been compelled to offer up her holocausts; and the magistrates of Vercelli were still resisting the encroachment of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in 1288, and only came in the end to a compromise, which greatly limited the authority of the Episcopal Court*.

All the efforts of the Court of Rome to establish the Inquisition in Val d'Aosta were baffled to the last by the brave spirit of that simple population†; and in the other states of Savoy all ecclesiastical jurisdiction was made subservient to the sovereign, and laymen always shared in the deliberations of the Holy Office.

* Statuta Communis Vercellarum, pp. 167–169.

† Sclopis, Legislazione del Piemonte, p. 483.

The piety of the Princes of Savoy, which, as we have seen, from very early times threw the bishops of their dioceses into their arms for protection, and made them submissive to their lordly sway, equally obtained fair terms from the Popes in their favour, so that a good understanding with the Roman See was easily kept up without too great a sacrifice of dignity and independence.

At an epoch in which the great Western Schism had almost wholly undermined the authority of the Papal court, and created perfect anarchy in the Church, Amadeus VIII. called together a council of his own bishops at Geneva, and there came to a concordat with them, by which the power of the Ecclesiastical Courts over laymen was clearly defined, and their authority circumscribed within bounds which might seem proper and reasonable for that period (1430)*.

To the religious disposition of mind of the Princes of Savoy we have already frequently alluded: we will not undertake to determine how much bigotry or hypocrisy might be blended with it.

Great stress must not be laid on the facts that Thomas I. joined the French princes in the crusade against the Albigenses, in the early part of the thirteenth century, or that Amadeus VIII. sent his contingent to the Emperor Sigismund against the Hussites of the fifteenth. Mere love of adventure may sufficiently account for the former deed, and duty of vassalage, as well as deep policy, will explain the latter.

* Cibrario, Studi Storici, ii. 407.

We have already given our best views as to the strange resolution which led Amadeus VIII. first to a hermitage, then to the papacy. We shall soon see the immediate consequences which such steps had on the destinies of his State.

But in the meanwhile it is important to observe that Felix V., by his resignation of the pontifical chair in 1449, purchased the goodwill of Rome in behalf of Savoy.

He was scarcely laid in the grave, when Nicholas V. by a bull of the 13th of January of the same year, 1451, bestowed ample privileges on the duke, Louis, by which it was provided that no archbishop, bishop, or abbot should be appointed in the states of Savoy without the sovereign's "intention and consent," and that no benefice within those territories should be conferred upon an alien.

These concessions, which, in spite of all opposition, received frequent confirmation during that and the following century, placed the Church of Savoy on a footing of independence, which had little to envy the terms granted by Rome in her concordats with the mightiest monarchies*.

It was certainly not the fault of Amadeus VIII. if these privileges were allowed to fall into desuetude in later times.

* Sclopis, Legislazione del Piemonte, p. 458.

CHAPTER VI.

CIVILIZATION IN PIEDMONT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the peaceful disposition of Amadeus VIII., the military organization of his state received great increment and stability at the hands of this provident legislator.

Savoy had at all times been a warlike country.

The feudal nobility of the Alps, proud and poor, were ever ready to muster under the standard of their princes. They were drawn up in a heavy array of cavalry, known by the name of "Banner, or Squadron of Savoy," numbering in its best moments sixteen hundred mounted men-at-arms, all of gentle blood, and followed by seven thousand infantry, chiefly bow- and crossbowmen*.

It was but seldom that the Counts of Savoy consented to resign to any man the honour of leading their forces into the field; a commander-in-chief, bearing the title of Marshal of Savoy, appears however under the Green Count, in 1353, and during his ex-

* Saluce, Histoire Militaire du Piémont, i. 94.

peditions to the East, to Lombardy, and Naples. Yet the office and dignity of Marshal seems to have been more permanently instituted by Amadeus VIII., who appointed these officers for life, and who, at some time, seems even to have had two of them in his suite. The regular series begins with Boniface de Challant, in 1397*.

But Amadeus VIII. was bent on a conservative rather than an aggressive policy. His warlike establishments were chiefly of a defensive character. His greatest care was bestowed on the fortification of castles, a line of which already extended, at the entrance of the valleys, all along the western chain of the Alps on either side. For the manning of these citadels he instituted a regular militia, under the orders of "captains," distributed into permanent garrisons. This kind of landwehr, or burgher guard, bore the name of "bandes," or "établies," and were armed and equipped after the plan of the Swiss infantry. It had already long existed in Savoy, but it received now a more careful organization, and attained a higher degree of efficiency†.

It is important to observe that up to this time the armed force of Savoy was purely Savoyard.

The Counts, who had almost perpetually their hand on the hilt of their sword, had little to rely upon beside the "ban" and "arrière-ban" of their feudal retainers. All the mountain region originally under

* Galli, Cariche del Piemonte, i. 105.

† Saluce, Hist. Militaire du Piémont, i. 124.

their sceptre, no less than the Pays de Vaud, Bresse, and other Burgundian districts, strongly organized on feudal principles, had hardly any will but that of their lord. They were the most loyal and knightly of a land renowned for devotion and chivalry. South of the Alps, the nobles of Aosta and Susa, and to a great extent those of Canavese, were equally faithful and adventurous. All this feudal array encompassed their lord on the battle-field, as pliable and yet as impenetrable as the corslet of chain-mail round his breast. There is hardly an instance of the "Escadron de Savoie" being put to rout.

But at the foot of the mountains, in the new districts added to his territory by Amadeus VIII., a new order of things had begun,—other institutions, other manners.

The Piedmontese, like all other Italians, had laid down their arms. Up to the year 1300, the Marquises of Saluzzo and Montferrat, as well as the Princes of Piedmont or Achaia, had wielded a sword of their own. They had led their own vassals and the burghers of devoted towns into the field. But with the descent of Henry VII. into Italy, in 1310, a new mode of warfare had set in. The German soldiery which that Emperor had in his suite were dispersed after his death, and hired themselves out to the highest bidder. Their success soon drew other mercenaries from the countries beyond the Alps. The Italians set up gold against iron. They used these foreigners to fight the battles of their fatherland. War became a

trade, and whole communities of men, republics, and states, paid first for their conquests, then even for freedom and security.

A whole nation was thus utterly, hopelessly demoralized. For the best part of half a century, French, German, and English adventurers scoured the land. By degrees some of the natives enlisted in the ranks of those foreign marauders; they learned from them, they excelled them; for a hundred years more, Italian genius asserted its ascendancy over northern strength. The age of Lando's and Hawkwood's was soon over, and that of Barbiano's, Braccio's, and Sforza's commenced.

National glory alone however gained by the change. The great mass of the people was no less utterly estranged from arms. They had no less, so far as self-dependence is concerned, forsworn their first title to the dignity of men. The Italian communities came into the hands of Savoy unable to fight otherwise than by their purses. They claimed, as the highest privilege, exemption from military duty; they paid for it, and obtained it. We read, indeed, that they were ever ready with large subsidies in favour of princes they loved, and from whom they knew they could obtain, as ample return for their sacrifices, the abolition of all that remained of the relics of feudalism. Thus, in 1396, we are told*, Chieri supplied Amadeus VIII. with one hundred lances (every lance consisting of one man-at-arms with at least two mounted followers),

* Saluce, Histoire Militaire, i. 108.

and, besides, with thirty-two foot soldiers and fifty crossbowmen. The "lances," however, were in all probability mere adventurers hired for the purpose. The cities had, in their terms of dedition, invariably stipulated for the amount of troops they were to furnish to their new sovereign, the number of days they were bound to serve, and the distance from home they might be called upon to march. All this was in accordance with the usages of feudal service, and the Piedmontese towns often exceeded their obligations; but the unwillingness or incapacity of these contingents for active duty, especially in the newly acquired districts, was soon made manifest, and the prince was soon fain to compound with his subjects, accepting subsidies in money instead of men.

This dastardly practice prevailed in the great cities of Lombardy and Tuscany, where it seemed desirable that warlike pursuits should not interfere with trading interests, and where, moreover, the tyrannical usurpers everywhere rising on the ruins of Italian freedom, were bent on demoralizing the people and using their very wealth as a means of oppression. Thus Milan exempted all her citizens from military service in 1339, and even democratic Florence followed the example in 1351; and in the same manner, there were whole communities in Piedmont, such as Vercelli, which purchased the same ignominious immunity from the most sacred of men's duties.

The military regeneration of Piedmont by the Princes of Savoy was the work of the ensuing ages.

Meanwhile this falling off of the Italians from military life, which was fraught with such fatal consequences to the country, has been rather gratuitously ascribed to the cowardice of the people; but it may be proved to be merely the effect of false calculation, of premature and forced civilization.

In every modern state the people have been reduced to the same defenceless condition. Everywhere has the soldier's trade been set apart, and standing armies have superseded the clumsy and unwieldy system of feudal service. But the Italians "disarmed" full two centuries too early, and found themselves in the precarious condition of one of our modern European communities, which should dismiss its troops exactly at the moment that all its neighbours were putting their own armaments on the war footing.

Municipal freedom in Italy had, in the twelfth century, crushed feudalism, and either annihilated or absorbed that class which was elsewhere privileged to bear arms, and made it the business of life. The Lombard burghers took the arms from their nobles, and thought they could add war to their other humbler but more useful avocations. They fancied they could work and fight by turns, as need was. But a burgher militia, under the best circumstances, was only available for defensive operations; it could only by the greatest efforts engage in prolonged and complicate manœuvres. These were, at first, carried on by the aristocracy of the cities—those ill-disguised nobles, who had nothing of the burgher but the mere title;

but when these either became extinct, or were utterly exhausted in all those endless domestic and party feuds, the republics saw themselves disarmed, and they then felt the necessity of extraneous aids.

Those very states which developed the greatest activity, which aimed at remote conquests, and formed distant alliances, were the first that resorted to hired forces. Venice and Genoa, invincible at sea, where they certainly never fought with a foreign sword, where their heroism was never disputed, could only attempt inland aggrandisement by means of land forces, and these they took in their pay. Now the adoption of such a weapon by one state rendered a similar course, in mere self-defence, imperative on all others. The free cities, indeed, never dreamt that, if the game became truly earnest, their patriotism would not, at any time, be a match for the ferocity of mere hirelings; and, in fact, German and English companies had, in repeated instances, to fall back ignominiously before the raw recruits of the towns. But the aspect of things was sadly changed when the ranks of those foreign cut-throats were filled up with Italian adventurers, who added deep tactics and policy to mere martial prowess, who for the most part belonged to the broken-down and dispersed but still influential rural nobility, or to the "Fuorusciti" or Exiles, also men of noble blood, from the cities, who found therefore followers and supporters both in the country and in the cities themselves.

The free towns, moreover, had given the example

of these companies of adventure merely for aggressive purposes. They mistrusted and hated them, jealously kept them from their walls, and eagerly dismissed them at the first opportunity. But the number of free cities was daily diminishing; the tyrants who usurped their power had no longer any feeling of patriotism to appeal to; and they used those terrible auxiliaries for defence as well as for offence, against domestic no less than foreign enemies. The evil, such as it was at Florence, Venice, or Genoa, might have been kept within proper limits: it might eventually have been overcome; but under Visconti or Scala it became immense, incurable. The soldiers of fortune were for a long time the mainstay of tyrants—and they became, in turn, tyrants.

Several exceptional circumstances extenuated this grievous evil in Piedmont.

Liberty—or what there was like it in Italian municipalism—never made here very rapid strides. The nobles were never utterly exterminated. The native rulers of Savoy, Montferrat, and Saluzzo, were at no time without a feudal retinue, a national armed force of their own. At an epoch in which the fortunes of Savoy were at the lowest ebb in Italy, the princes of that House, who had always more armed men than they could find employment for, often came forward as mere soldiers of fortune. Thomas I., in 1225, lent on hire one hundred and eighty "Burgundian" lances (about five hundred and forty men) to the republics of Asti and Genoa, against Alessandria

and Vercelli*. Amadeus V. bargained with Milan and Asti for four hundred men-at-arms, whom he was to lead to their aid in the league against William VII. of Montferrat, in 1290†. Amadeus VI. was himself little more than a condottiere, when he headed the league against Milan, in 1372, or when he accompanied Louis of Anjou in his expedition to Naples in 1382. In his wars of Piedmont, that most chivalrous Green Count did not disdain to make use of foreign mercenaries, though we have seen how hard he strove to rid the country of their baneful presence during the intervals in which the rebellion of James of Achaia (1360–1363) and the minority of Amadeus, son of James (1368–1377), placed that province under his immediate government.

As to the Princes of Achaia, a sort of Lacklands, tormented by an ambition immeasurably above their powers, often abandoned to their own resources by their cousins of Savoy, unable or unwilling to form a party among the few Piedmontese nobles who acknowledged themselves their vassals, but whom they were bent upon crushing rather than turning to good account, loth also to trust the militia of Turin and other towns, for they never forgot the base trick played by the Turinese upon the head of their line, Thomas II. of Flanders, in 1256,—the Princes of Achaia, never unscrupulous as to their means, were by necessity, as well as by choice, thrown into the hands of foreign adventurers. Indeed, we hear at a very early period,

* Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, i. 281. † *Ibid.* ii. 211.

in 1342, that James of Achaia, together with Manfred of Cardè, the pretender to the heritage of Saluzzo, enlisted some disbanded Catalonian and Aragonese troops, and formed, on terms of offensive and defensive alliance, a band called "Compagnia del Fiore," in imitation of the St. George's, Great, and Holy Companies, which were already desolating the country. The charter and statutes of this Del Fiore Company have been preserved to our days, and a rare monument they are of the spirit which animated the half-knights, half-freebooters who founded it*.

But, although the Princes of Achaia, and still more the Princes of Montferrat and Saluzzo, so far gave in to the spirit of the times as to employ foreign hirelings, and did it on a large scale, heedless of the unutterable woe they inflicted on friends as well as foes; still it must not be forgotten that they fought with, as well as through, them. They were themselves no mean condottieri, and some of the ablest of those military chiefs were natives of their country, and formed in their school: such were Facino Cane, Francesco Bussone, Count of Carmagnola, Cecchino Broglia; and some would even say, Alberico da Barbiano, or Balbiano, himself,—the very founder of the new Italian military tactics†, whom others describe as a native of Romagna. The Piedmontese princes, unlike the craven Scala or Visconti, were always on the sad-

* Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, iii. 83.

† Denina, Italia Occidentale, ii. 183.—Costa de Beauregard, Maison Royale de Savoie, ii. 152.

dle, always at the head of their forces, howsoever recruited: no stranger ever wielded their sword; hence, none had a chance of snatching the sceptre from their hands. Facino Cane only needed a longer life, Carmagnola only a less tender conscience, to anticipate the deed of the more fortunate Francesco Sforza, by usurping the splendid inheritance of Visconti*. But in Piedmont there were no tyrants hiding in their castles, handling their generals like two-edged tools, besetting them with jealousy and suspicion, pitting one against the other, till in the end they overreached themselves, worried a willing and trusty servant into rebellion, or thrust him into the arms of their enemies: there were no dastards like the patricians of Venice, circumventing a rash and headlong warrior, defeating an apprehended treachery by a positive perfidy, and hastening to break their tool ere their work was achieved.

The princes in Piedmont were all soldiers to the last; and their influence and example could not utterly be lost amongst their subjects. So that when attempts were made by Amadeus VIII. to extend to his new acquisitions those bands or Etablies, which became the elements of a permanent army in the state, he was aided by a certain spirit of manly dignity still lingering among the people.

It is nevertheless very singular that a certain difference in the military aptitude of Savoyard and Pied-

* Tenivelli, Biografia Piemontese, Decade iii.—Ricotti, Compagnie di Ventura, vol. ii. cap. i. and ii., vol. iii. cap. i.

montese is still discernible at the present day; so that whilst the former, like all the rest of the French nation to which they belong, are born soldiers, the latter, like all other Italians, can only be made soldiers; and a certain *nuance* or gradation again exists between the Piedmontese of the "Terra Vetus" and those of the "Patria Nova;" so that the best fighting-men south of the Alps are supplied by Aosta and Piedmont proper, no matter whether mountain or plain, whilst military tastes and habits seem to decrease in proportion as we recede from the Alps; and the most indifferent soldiers will be found in the regiments of Casale, Novara, Savona, etc.—those recruited in the provinces which came late into the possession of Savoy, and only recently subjected to her military training: so true it is that warlike habits are easily lost by a civilized people, at least in a southern climate, and only acquired with the greatest difficulty.

The Italians, too sweepingly charged with weakness and effeminacy, are however most feeble and enervated where the Government has most readily excused them from manly duties, where it has most assiduously encouraged their idle and luxurious propensities. It is a people that runs willingly into extremes. Between an ancient Roman and a modern Neapolitan, the whole difference is merely matter of discipline. Those who have studied Prussia and Piedmont with sufficient attention, well know what regeneratory influence may be exercised by the mere drill-sergeant.

Meanwhile it may be quoted as a significant fact,

illustrative both of the warlike superiority of Savoy over Piedmont, and of the favour the nobles of the first-named country enjoyed at court, that in the whole series of Marshals of Savoy, from the first permanent establishment of the dignity by Amadeus VIII. in 1397, to its suppression by Emanuel Philibert in 1560, not a single Cisalpine name occurs, unless we except the Challants of Aosta, and some of the minor branches of Savoy itself, and Saluzzo*. The lists of chancellors and other civil officers present very different, and indeed opposite results.

With all these premises it will not be difficult to conceive a distinct idea of the real greatness and strength of the State of Savoy at the time that Amadeus VIII. first united it, in 1430, and afforded it great prosperity by a long interval of peace.

Under Emanuel Philibert, after the middle of the sixteenth century, the vassals of Savoy were reckoned at 1860: of these, 1608 belonged to Piedmont alone, and 252 to Savoy. The fiefs in the whole state were 5887. We must however bear in mind that at the time alluded to, the state had been completely ruined by a sixty years' war and foreign occupation; and besides, that the Transalpine possessions of the House were reduced to the bare Duchy of Savoy in its present dimensions, and a few Burgundian districts. We are therefore fully entitled to take the vassals under Amadeus VIII., who still possessed Vaud, Lower Valais, etc., to have been at least twice the number, even

* Galli, Cariche del Piemonte, i. 107.

if we tax with exaggeration those who raised the number of such vassals to 7000*.

We have already stated, on the testimony of an ingenious, even if not the most diligent historian†, that Amadeus VIII., in some great emergency, sent no less than 20,000 combatants into the field. He may however have swelled the ranks of his native troops by hired auxiliaries. But Italian writers, who at a very early period busied themselves with statistics, compute at 8000 the men-at-arms whom the Duke of Savoy kept in his pay about the year 1454, adding however that he could employ only half that number in active warfare. A force of 4000 men-at-arms implied at least a mass of 12,000 combatants. At the same period, by the same estimates and on the same conditions, the forces of France and England were reckoned at 30,000 men-at-arms each; those of Milan and Venice, each at 10,000; of the Pope at 6000; whilst Florence, then at the acme of her prosperity, could only muster 4000 men-at-arms; and the Marquis of Montferrat, despite his revenue of 150,000 ducats, had only 2000 men. All these powers, like Savoy, could only rely on half their forces for aggressive purposes ‡.

By a similar reckoning Savoy, in 1454, when she

* Ughelli, Italia Sacra, iv. 1016.—Galli, Cariche del Piemonte, vol. i. Appendix, p. 14.—Boldù, Relazione, Albèri, Relazioni Venete, iii. 437.

† Costa de Beauregard, Maison Royale de Savoie, ii. 255.

‡ Sanuto, Vite dei Duchi di Venezia, Rer. Italicarum Scriptor. xxii. 962.

was already in her decline, would have been the fourth state in Italy; inferior only to Naples, Milan, and Venice. Under Amadeus VIII. she was undoubtedly a match for either Venice or Milan.

Savoy laboured however under great disadvantages: it was not an Italian state; its interests, up to a very recent period, had been altogether Transalpine. Piedmont had just come into its hands as a mere dependency,—a subjected, though not strictly speaking a conquered territory. The head and heart of the state was in Savoy, and the House of its rulers, closely connected with the various French dynasties, only became aware of the importance of those new Italian possessions, when it had renounced all hopes of aggrandisement on the other side.

Moreover, the whole state of Savoy hardly boasted a city.

The great capitals of the old Burgundian kingdoms, Lyons, Vienne, and Arles, were beyond its reach. All the efforts of Amadeus VI. and VIII. to make themselves at home in Geneva,—their natural metropolis when they were masters of Bresse, Vaud, and Lower Valais,—were, as we have seen, frustrated by the republican spirit of that city. Chambéry was, at the utmost, such a town as may grow up by the mere favour of princes; at a time, too, when princes wandered about from castle to castle without a fixed residence. It numbered 435 "fuochi," or families, in 1331: its population may therefore have amounted to 2175 souls.*

* Cibrario, Economia Politica del Medio Evo, iii. 82.

South of the Alps the principality of Piedmont was soon to have a capital. But Turin was far from being the most important town of Piedmont in the times of Amadeus VIII.; it was not even so large as Ivrea, Chieri, or Savigliano, and bore no comparison to Vercelli. This latter, though only a recent acquisition, and lying on an open frontier, so far outshone Turin, that several of Amadeus's successors established their residence there, and even assembled the States-General within its walls.

Turin had, in 1377, only 700 fuochi, a population not exceeding 4200 souls. Even when it had become the acknowledged capital of the whole State, under Emanuel Philibert, the circuit of its walls was about 1400 paces (less than a mile and a half*), and at the close of the sixteenth century the population had risen to no more than 17,000 souls. It was only 41,000 in 1706. Every one may see what proportion such numbers bear, for instance, to Milan, which in 1288 had no less than 13,000 houses, with 200,000 inhabitants†, and had grown, in 1492, to 18,000 houses, and a population of 292,000 souls; or to Venice, whose house property was, toward the year 1400, valued at 7,000,000 ducats, and its annual revenue at 500,000‡; or to Florence, which numbered from 90,000 to 100,000 souls in 1336§, and whose in-

* Cibrario, Torino, ii. 17.

† Galvan. Flamm. Manipul. Florum, Rer. Ital. xi. 711.

‡ Sanuto, Duchi di Venezia, Rer. Ital. xxii. 958.

§ Giovan Villani, Hist. Fiorentine, Rer. Ital. xiii. 826.

dwellers, in more prosperous times, may be justly estimated at 140,000.

Nor is it Turin alone that suggests the idea of meanness and poverty.

Even Asti and Chieri, notwithstanding the very extensive trade they carried on in foreign lands, do not exhibit the relics of the splendour attained even by second-rate towns of Eastern Lombardy or Tuscany, such as Cremona, Piacenza, Siena, or Pistoia. They seem at no time to have occupied a wider space than they now encompass; nor do we find in them such a wilderness of kitchen-gardens or mounds of rubbish as give evidence of departed population at Verona, Ravenna, Parma, or Ferrara. Small as those provincial towns of Piedmont may now be, they are all, with the exception of those in Val d'Aosta or Susa, on the increase. Chieri had, in 1377, 6665 souls, Ivrea 5196. They have, in modern times, risen respectively to 13,276 and to 9475, a population which, in all probability, they never boasted in the Middle Ages. The same and even greater progress is observable in Cuneo, Savigliano, Pinerolo, Moncalieri, and all the towns of the plain; whilst Milan, Venice, and Florence are still striving in vain to regain their former prosperity, and Pisa, Siena, and so many illustrious places are sunk beyond the very hope of recovery.

The reason of this difference is to be found in the fact that municipal freedom, and the artificial life it engendered, never soared so high west of the Ticino; hindered as it was in its growth by the bishops down

to the thirteenth century, and strangled by the success of the princely houses in the fourteenth; and also, that the feudal nobles, never thoroughly subdued, did not take up their permanent abode in the towns.

Not but Chieri, Asti, and Vercelli had nobles in great numbers: the first-named city, with its 1333 fuochi, boasted at least its hundred noble families*; but these, for the most part, belonged to the mere *patriciate*, or burgher aristocracy, men whose fortune was made by trade, who rose and fell with the commercial fortunes of the city. The real landed aristocracy had very often only a nominal residence in the town. The lords of Canavese, those of Montferrat, the various branches of the great houses of Biella, Vercelli, Ivrea, etc., could not, and would not, be weaned from their dull but independent castle-life. It was otherwise in Eastern Lombardy or Tuscany; at Milan, in 1288, the nobility alone lived in sixty streets†.

But, notwithstanding this *bourgeois* character of the Piedmontese towns, and the consequent inferiority of that province to the rest of Italy, the comparison between Piedmont itself and the Transalpine possessions of Savoy was still greatly in favour of the former.

In everything but military spirit the sovereign state was considerably behind its newly subjected provinces.

* Cibrario, Società Populari ed Ospizi dei Nobili, Studi Storici, i. 350.

† Galv. Flamm. Rer. Ital. xi. 711.

The stirring spirit of Tuscan and Lombard republicanism could not be without its reaction on the duller and slower Piedmontese communities. The different ranks of society had been drawn together, and the nation was formed. In Savoy whatever was not noble consisted merely of shepherds and hunters (and the sumptuary laws of Amadeus VIII., in the fifth book of his Statutes, distinguish no less than twelve castes, seven of which,—barons, bannerets, knights-vavassors, squire-vavassors, bachelors, knight-doctors, and plain doctors,—belonged to the upper classes; whilst the people was made up of greater and smaller burghers, artisans, and labourers.*). But, on the other hand, in that active crucible of Italian life, everything tended to amalgamation. The commerce of the Piedmontese and other greater Italian marts had as yet suffered no decline. Agriculture, whenever a pause in the wars allowed the country to breathe, received daily a fresh impulse. The system of irrigation, which originated, or perhaps only revived, in Lombardy in the darkest ages, and led to such splendid achievements as the "Naviglio Grande" by the Milanese, in 1179–1257, was followed up in Piedmont, a country blessed by nature with a most inexhaustible treasure of waters. Vercelli had a canal of irrigation as early as 1219: a work of still greater importance between that town and Ivrea was commenced during the lifetime of Amadeus VIII. in 1448†. The Crusades had introduced the cultivation of new

* Costa de Beauregard, Maison de Savoie, i. 155.

† Cibrario, Economia Politica, iii. 19.

seeds. Maize or Turkish corn has always been popularly believed to have been first grown in the West, on Montferrat fields, where it was imported by Boniface III. of Montferrat, though no mention of it occurs perhaps until the fifteenth century. During the same age rice-grounds flourished in the deep plains of Savigliano and Saluzzo, and they were only drained up from sanitary motives by an edict of Charles III. Duke of Savoy, in 1523. Silk, first introduced into Sicily by Roger Guiscard in 1148, had very rapidly spread throughout Italy, where the free cities enforced by law the cultivation of mulberries*. Nor were the Piedmontese towns slack in experiments of that nature; for we read that, in the fourteenth century, the magistrates of Turin repeatedly enjoined the plantation of olive and almond trees, which however the severity of the climate did not permit to thrive†. The mineral resources of the country began at an early period to be turned to some good purpose. Philip I., Count of Savoy, and Amadeus V., his successor, toward the latter part of the thirteenth century, invited experienced engineers from Tuscany to stimulate the industry of native miners. The gold and silver mines, especially in the valleys of Aosta, Lanzo, and Susa, known before the Roman æra, and which were a frequent cause of contention between the ancient Salassi of Aosta and their neighbours, never yielded much in modern times. But the Pennine and

* Denina, Rivoluzioni d'Italia, vi. 151.
† Cibrario, Economia Politica, iii. 17.

Graian Alps, the mountains of Savoy, of Biella, and Val Sesia have always been, and are still, rich in iron and copper ores.

The cities of the plain had each some industry of their own. Nearly the whole of the wool of England and a great part of Germany and Spain, was consumed in the Lombard and Tuscan factories: even such cloths as were woven in Flanders or elsewhere out of Italy received their last finish and were dyed at Florence. In progress of time silk-weaving employed the greatest number of hands in Italy. But even in all these matters Piedmont was, it seems, somewhat behindhand. The first measures for the introduction of wool and silk manufactures in Turin, on any extensive scale, belong to the early part of the fifteenth century, and owe their increment to the patronage of Amadeus VIII.* Private industry may however have required no incitement on the part of the Government at an earlier period; but at any rate the Piedmontese towns belonging in the same age to the Duchy of Milan—Tortona, Alessandria, and Novara—very largely contributed by their industry to the ample revenue of that State. The "Patria Vetus" of Piedmont was in almost all matters the most backward, and even the towns that came later into the power of Savoy seemed somewhat paralysed by the rule of these rather well-meaning than provident princes.

Some of the looms which were in full activity in the Middle Ages at Chieri, Savigliano, and other places,

* Cibrario, Torino, i. 420.

after a long period of success, still exist, although now greatly on the decline*.

Intellectual development in these Subalpine communities kept pace with commercial activity.

We have recorded that a "General Study" existed at Vercelli before 1220. The magistrates of that town provided five hundred "hospicia" (chambers) for the accommodation of scholars, in 1228†. At this period the school was frequented by students of four nations or "languages"—Italy; Germany; France, Normandy, and England; Provence, Catalonia, and Spain. The school of Vercelli was a democratic institution, and went to decay with the decline of Lombard republicanism: it was all but annihilated by the various scourges of war and pestilence toward the end of the fourteenth century. Those of Pavia and Piacenza had fared no better: it was by the prompting of some wandering doctors of the last-named schools that Louis, the last Prince of Achaia, offered them a safe abode at Turin, in 1404. This led to the foundation of the "General Study" or University of Turin, in favour of which the same Prince obtained, in 1412 and 1413, diplomas of the Emperor Sigismund and of Pope John XXII.‡

To this institution, which he called his beloved daughter (Alma Filia), Amadeus VIII. was soon after-

* Denina, Rivoluzioni d'Italia, vi. 193.—Cibrario, Economia Politica, iii. 20.

† Durandi, Antica Condizione del Vercellese, p. 49.

‡ Datta, Principi d'Acaia, i. 321.

wards liberal of charters, privileges, and endowments. The University of Turin was, in consequence of squabbles between "town and gown," removed to Chieri in 1421: it passed over to Savigliano, owing to the same causes, in 1434; and it was at length restored to its original seat at the earnest request of the Turinese, in 1436.

Up to this period the states of Savoy had no high-school of their own. An attempt of Amadeus VI. to establish a similar institution at Geneva, in 1368, had no lasting effect. The academy of that town, the origin of which is fondly referred to that period, owes its existence to the exertions of the Reformers, Farel, in 1536, and Calvin, in 1558*.

A satisfactory evidence of the state of learning in Piedmont may be drawn from the very early establishment of the art of printing.

At Turin, John Fabri de Langres opened a printing office in 1474†, the same year, it is supposed, in which Caxton first appeared as a printer at Westminster; but printing-presses were in operation at Mondovì as early as 1472, and at Savigliano in 1470. In the latter town a German, by name John Glimm, conjointly with a native of the place, Cristoforo Beggiami, brought out an edition of Boetius, bearing the date of 1470‡. This year, it must be remembered, corresponds with the date of the very first publications of the German,

* Spon, Histoire de Genève, i. 271, 304, notes.
† Cibrario, Torino, i. 407.
‡ Casalis, Dizionario, xix. 507.

John of Spire, at Venice, the city which was so soon to rise to the head of the art of printing in Europe; and the new invention had only been introduced into Italy, at Subiaco, by the two Germans, Schweinheim and Pannartz, five years before (1465).

The activity of the press throughout Piedmont, at so very early an epoch, is indeed remarkable. Printers were established at Pinerolo and Saluzzo before 1479. In that year a complete edition of the Bible was achieved at Asti, and the premises from which it issued are still shown as a curiosity; the business of printing has been carried on in the same house ever since, without interruption.

No less striking is the contrast between all this mental cultivation in the Subalpine districts, and the backwardness of the countries beyond the Alps. In the Pays de Vaud no book was printed before 1534, with the single exception of a Latin Bible, by the monks of Rougemont*.

With all these proofs of extensive learning, it would be no easy task to give a distinct account of the actual state of literature in mediæval Piedmont.

To the Italian poetry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that province contributed next to nothing. Social life was there still divided between the town and the castle: castle-life was mainly French and Provençal; town-life was Lombard. So long as Latin was the common literary language of Europe, Lom-

* Vulliemin, Le Chroniqueur, p. 8.

bardy, then at the acme of prosperity, took the lead in Italy in such literary and scientific studies as still engaged the attention of mankind; and the Piedmontese towns, or, for that matter, the very mountains of Savoy or Aosta, never remained behindhand. Some of the greatest divines of the Middle Ages were born on or at the foot of the Alps. We have already mentioned Bernard of Menthon, the "Apostle of the Alps," founder of the order who took upon themselves the care of the mountain-passes now bearing his name. He flourished at Aosta, at the close of the tenth century. A native of the same place, born in 1033, was that Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, who plays so conspicuous a part in English history, as a champion of the Church against the earliest Norman kings. Peter Lombard, the "Master of Sentences," the greatest of Abailard's disciples, the first scholar and divine of the twelfth century, came from a village in the territory of Novara. At Cavaglià, in the neighbouring district of Biella, was also born, in the early part of the thirteenth century, John Gersen, for a long time Abbot of St. Stephen, in Vercelli, to whom many critics have confidently attributed the original of the most popular of all ascetic books, whether in the Roman Catholic or in any other Church—the famous work "De Imitatione Christi." The learning and piety of the Savoyard clergy caused no less than three of them to be raised to the Pontificate: Nicholas II., in 1059; Celestine IV., in 1241; Innocent V., in 1276; even if we say nothing of Robert of Geneva (Clement VIII.)

and Amadeus VIII. of Savoy (Felix V.), who are omitted in the series of legitimate Popes, and who partly owed their exaltation to rank and other causes.

In other branches of learning we need only observe that some of the Latin chroniclers of the Piedmontese cities, such as the Alfieri and Ventura of Asti, Azario of Novara, Candido of Vigevano, and others, no less than the monks of the Novalaise, furnished Muratori with some of the most important documents of Italian history; whilst the labours of recent Piedmontese scholars, especially of the "Deputazione di Storia Patria," instituted by the late king, Charles Albert, have brought to light other mediæval manuscripts of great interest, such as the Chronicle of Jacobus ab Aquis, and others of Montferrat and Saluzzo, which had been either overlooked, or too readily treated with contempt by the editor of "Rerum Italicarum."

But when the various European languages came into being, that is, when the formless dialects which, under the general name of "Romance Language," had been the common speech in France, Spain, and Italy, began to be distinguished into separate idioms, and these became the organs for the utterance of gentle thoughts in poetry, the means of social intercourse at Court and among the most polished classes; one of the many Italian dialects, the Tuscan, rose to pre-eminence; it became national, and the semi-barbarous Cisalpine and Subalpine dialects were doomed to silence and obscurity. It was owing to this circumstance that Lombardy, in which social life received so much

earlier and so much wider a development than Tuscany, played nevertheless so secondary a part in literature. The greater mixture of Northern element which imparted to the Milanese and Piedmontese people that energy which they so ably turned to warlike or industrial pursuits, at the same time gave their tongue a harshness and uncouthness which unfitted it for literary purposes, and the Italian came into the valley of the Po, from the Arno and the Tiber, almost as an acquired language.

Hence in the glorious blaze of light by which the writings of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio ushered in a new day to modern European life, North Italy had but little share. Up to the fifteenth century in Piedmont, whatever was not Latin was almost entirely French. The Lombard and Piedmontese dialects had, by their sounds, though not by their roots, greater affinity with the "Langue d'Oc" and "Langue d'Oil" (South and North French), than to the "Lingua del Sì," or Italian. A great revolution in the manners of Upper Italy had also been effected by the occupation of a part of the country by Charles of Anjou, and by his influence on the whole. The Provençal language must have been current especially in Piedmont, where the House of Provence had settlements at so early a period. Whatever Romance literature flourished therefore in Piedmont or Liguria, was altogether of a Transalpine character. Natives not merely of Nice, which was politically Provençal down to the close of the fourteenth century, and continues nationally so at the

present day, but also of Turin, of Fossano, of various parts of Montferrat, as well as Genoa and Venice, are, like the more famous Sordello of Mantua, numbered among the Provençal Troubadours*. Bards of that class were found at all times flourishing at the Court of Savoy. The fair Beatrix of Provence, daughter of Thomas I. of Savoy, and wife of Raymond Bérenger V., last of the Counts of Provence of that House, was the inexhaustible theme of their songs. Her brother, Peter II. of Savoy, died with the notes of his minstrel's harp, De Ferrat, or Ferraldo, of Nice, twanging in his ears. Her other brother, Thomas II. Count of Flanders, Amadeus V., the Green and Red Counts, all mirrors of chivalry, had always a welcome in their castles for the "professors of the Gay Science." Equal friends to the Troubadours and Trouvères, were the Marquises of Montferrat, both at home and in the East, and the Lords of Saluzzo. One of these latter, Thomas III., the contemporary and ill-starred competitor of Amadeus VIII., was himself a poet. He wrote, before 1400, a poem in French, entitled "Le Chevalier Errant," no unfair specimen of the literature of the Northern Trouvères†. To him we owe, perhaps, a clue to the origin of the story of Griselda,—the heroine of Boccaccio and Chaucer,—the pattern of more than wifely humility, patience, and fidelity, whose prototype may not be found among the Marchionesses of the House of Saluzzo, from Boniface

* Sismondi, Literature of the South of Europe, ch. iv.

† Muletti, Saluzzo, iv. 373.

of Savona downwards, but must be sought in the wife of one of the Counts or Viscounts who governed that district as lieutenants of the Counts of Turin or Auriate, at an earlier epoch,—perhaps in the tenth century,—ere the title or even the name of Saluzzo was extensively known*.

One of the Marquises of Montferrat, Theodore I., the first of the Palæologi, who inherited the marquisate in 1305, ranks also amongst the mediæval authors. He wrote a book on "Military Discipline," in his native language, Greek, in 1327; that is, nearly half a century before Boccaccio opened the first Greek school in Florence†. Scholars conversant with the state of learning in Italy in the days of Dante or Petrarch, can attach no trifling importance to this fact,—not that there is anything extraordinary in Theodore, a Greek, being able to write a work in his native language, but that he should think it worth while to do so, if he thought that work would remain a sealed book in his adopted country. The Marquis, however, translated his own treatise into Latin, at Vercelli, in 1420.

All this, however, was merely court literature; and to this we must also ascribe a singular poem in French, a long romance on the Battle of Gamenario, in which John II. of Montferrat thoroughly routed the army of Renforce d'Agoult, Seneschal of Queen Joan of Naples, in 1345. Although the people of Chieri and

* Muletti, Saluzzo, i. 77.

† San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 117.

Asti, on opposite sides, took share in the battle, no less than Piedmontese of other districts, and of their names and exploits honourable mention occurs in those verses; yet there is sufficient evidence that the poem was written by some of the minstrel-courtiers of the Marquis of Montferrat—probably a Frenchman—only out of flattery to the lord himself and for the delight of his court; it would at any rate be difficult to say to what extent such an effusion, which here and there affects loftiness of style, could be circulated among, or understood by, the people*.

But some rare specimens of the real literature of the people in the vulgar dialects have however come down to us.

Amongst them none are more interesting than the "Nobla Leicson," a religious poem, a kind of profession of faith of the Waldenses, which has been brought forward as an historical document of great importance, an evidence of the purity and holiness of their belief, and also of the antiquity of their sect. The poem bears its own date, and belongs undoubtedly

* The poem opens thus:—

Sur le doulx temps que reversissent
Toutes choses et bois fuerlissent,
Et oyseaulx a chanter se mettent
Sur les arbres que leurs fleurs jettent,
En l'année de deux foiz vint
Mil et trois cent et cinq advint
Qu'en Sicille eut une royne
Que haioit la part Gibeline
Et avoit Guelphez en chierté, etc.

— San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 140.

to the twelfth century; but it is not easy to prove that it was written "fully half a century before Peter Waldo of Lyons, who flourished towards 1160," which is exactly the point that Leger and the other advocates of the Waldenses are anxious to determine*. The expression

> "Ben ha mile e cent anez compli entierament
> Que fo scripta lorà car sen al derier temp"

('full eleven hundred years are entirely past, since it was written that we are at the end of time'), may equally apply to any year between 1100 and 1200, and nothing is more common in Italian parlance than to designate a century by its first year, saying, for instance, "Tasso flourished in five-hundred," to mean the year 1500, which stands thus for the whole sixteenth century, though the poet was born in 1544. This most important document, philologically important no less than historically and theologically—(of which a copy exists in the public library at Cambridge, where it was deposited by Sir Samuel Morland, ambassador of Cromwell at the Court of Savoy in 1650, and another in the library at Geneva,) was given by Voltaire as a specimen of the Provençal language; but it is merely written in the Romance language of the valleys, and bears indeed all the marks of the Piedmontese idiom of the present day. It affords a luminous proof of the use to which the vernacular

* Leger, Histoire Générale des Eglises Vaudoises, p. 26.—Charvaz, Origine dei Valdesi, p. 240.—Hallam's Middle Ages, ii. 443.

dialects were put by the people throughout Italy fully a century previous to the first specimens of Sicilian and Tuscan poetry*.

Another curious specimen of the Piedmontese language, but of a far later epoch, is a kind of warlike ode on the storming of Pancalieri by the troops of Louis, last Prince of Achaia, in his war against Thomas III. of Saluzzo, in 1410. It is no more than twelve distichs, and the language is even more uncouth than that of the "Nobla Leicson;" but it is valuable in our eyes as one of the few spontaneous effusions of popular genius which has escaped the neglect, not to say wilful destruction, of all such productions in subsequent ages, when the cultivation of pure Tuscan made the Northern Italians ashamed of their own dialects†.

By this time however, or immediately afterwards,

* Here is a specimen:—

Ma yo aus o dire, car se troba en ver
Que tuit li papa que foron de Salvestre entro en aquest,
E tuit li Cardinal, e tuit li vesque, e tuit li abà
Tuit aquisti ensemp non han tan de potestà
Que illi poissan perdonar un sol pecca mortal
Solament Dio perdona, que autre no ho po far.

† Datta, Principi d'Acaia, ii. 287.

Que lo castel de Panchaler
Que tuyt temp era fronter,
E de tute maluestay fontana
Per mantenir la bauzana,
E al pays de Peamont trater darmage,
E li seignour de chel castel naven lo corage
Ore le bon princi de la morea Louys
Elia descaza e honoreuolment conquys, etc.

the language of Dante began to be cultivated in Piedmont.

Gioffredo della Chiesa, a contemporary of Amadeus VIII., wrote his Chronicle of Saluzzo in very fair Italian, between 1430 and 1440*. He was followed, after the lapse of half a century, by Galeotto del Carretto, with his Chronicles of Montferrat, and by Benvenuto San Giorgio, a more copious and more accurate writer on the same subject. All these writers belonged to the younger branches of the families of Montferrat and Saluzzo. The two latter-named saw the dawn of the sixteenth century, — the epoch, in which Italy became one in matters connected with language and literature, precisely as she was losing not only her unity, but also her independence as a nation. The Marquis Louis II. of Saluzzo (1475–1504), a prince of very indifferent moral and political character, distinguished himself however not only as a patron of authors, but as an author also, and published, in 1499, a Treatise "On the good Government of States," and other works.

As a province of Italy, Piedmont may be charged with a certain tardiness in the fine arts no less than in literature.

Painters and other artists met indeed with early encouragement in the States of Savoy.

Amadeus V., a man of considerable elevation of mind, was a *dilettante* and a collector. He purchased a picture in London in 1292*. It was most probably

* Monument. Hist. Patr. iii. 842.

† Cibrario, Monarchia di Savoia, ii. 258.

a very early specimen of the Teutonic schools—German by the very subject—in that fantastically gloomy style in which the "Dance of Death" was endlessly reproduced. It was called "The Three Living and the Three Dead," and was meant to illustrate a legend current at the time, in which three departed spirits hold converse with three persons still in the flesh.

The same accomplished Count had already several artists, both native and foreign, in his pay, when, in 1313, he induced Giorgio d'Aquila, a Florentine and a pupil of Giotto, to settle at his court. The castles of Chambéry and Bourget were decorated with frescoes by this artist, some of which, though greatly defaced, are still perceptible. He continued in Savoy during the lifetime of Amadeus V. and under Edward and Aymon, and was carried off by the too famous pestilence of 1348. Amadeus VIII. had also his court painter, a Venetian named Gregorio Buono, who was employed at the abbey of Hautecombe, and at the chapel of Chambéry Castle. A portrait by him of the Duke, his patron, done in 1431, was to be seen until very lately in the latter-named edifice.

Painted glass, by some described as a French invention, seems to have been known on the Alps before it became common in Italy. Amadeus V. adorned the castle of Chambéry with similar glass in 1303*.

The Counts of Savoy had court architects as well

* Costa de Beauregard, Maison de Savoie, i. 167.—Cibrario, Economia Politica, ii. 351.

as court painters. Jean de Liége reared the stronghold of Pierre Châtel, in Bugey, under the Green and Red Counts. But all the monuments of art that ever rose by the munificence of those princes, if they escaped the ravages of time and the disasters of war, have suffered terribly from the innovating spirit of later times, especially during the long period in which the court of Chambéry or Turin was under the influence of French taste, no less than French politics.

Hardly any of the mediæval structures on the Alps, palatial or ecclesiastical, has escaped these fatal "improvements." The castles of Bourget and Avigliana are now mere ruins; of that of Chambéry only a tower or two are still standing; its Gothic chapel is disfigured by a modern façade. The old abbey of Hautecombe, utterly rifled, gutted, and all but demolished by those modern Vandals, the French, was indeed renewed upon the original plan by King Charles Felix, after the restoration of 1814; but it is at the best a sorry *rifacimento*.

There is not much more that belongs to the Middle Ages in the numerous abbeys and churches scattered all over the Alps. The abbey of Novalaise never recovered from the blow it received from the Saracens in 906: the present edifice is scarcely to be distinguished from the commonest country church in Italy. So at Bobbio, St. Dalmazzo, St. Benigno, Lucedio, etc., we find all that is or looks old invariably mean, and whatever is new merely gaudy and tawdry.

We must, however, always except the famous Sagra di San Michele, at the entrance of the valley of Susa; for there nature provided that men should not build without putting forth the strength of demigods, and that their work should be as hard to undo as it had been to accomplish*. That church, though greatly dilapidated, still bears the shape that its founder, Hugh le Decousu, a gentleman of Auvergne, first gave it toward the year 1000, and it is as singular a mixture of Lombard and early Gothic as the world can exhibit.

Of all the cities of Italy, as every one is aware, Turin is the most utterly destitute of mediæval monuments. The edifice that goes by the name of "Palazzo delle Torri" near the Piazza d'Italia, at the north entrance of the city, was by some described as an "early Gothic" or Byzantine structure of the age of Theodoric; by others it is supposed to have been a Roman gate. It was lined with battlements in 1404, and underwent further alterations in later times†. It is now used as a prison. As a Roman work, it is simply contemptible, by the side of the arches, gates, and baths of Aosta, Susa, or Acqui.

The only imposing structure of the Middle Ages at Turin consists of two lofty and solid towers, which form a part of the old castle of Porta Fibellona, now Palazzo Madama, facing the magnificent Contrada di Po‡. The castle was perhaps begun by William VII.

* D'Azeglio, La Sagra di San Michele disegnata e dipinta.

† Cibrario, Economia Politica, ii. 364; Torino, ii. 11.

‡ Datta, Principi d'Acaia, i. 312.

of Montferrat when he held the sovereignty of the town, in 1272. It was probably enlarged by the Princes of Achaia, at different epochs. The last of them erected the two towers between 1403 and 1416. The rest of the edifice was modernized, in no bad taste, in 1718.

Of the ancient residences of the Marquises of Montferrat and Saluzzo, even less than that remains.

A moss-grown tower at Chivasso, a doorway at Casale, is all that is now shown of the castles and palaces of the former. Of the latter, Revel is a ruin, Saluzzo a modernized prison. Nor is there anything ancient in the sepulchral vaults under which so many heroes of both houses lie at rest*.

The cities of Piedmont boast indeed, here and there, the relics of monuments which their public spirit reared up, either in honour of the Deity, or for the abode of their magistrates.

Two facts, however, become immediately obvious to any one who, free from prejudice, gives his attention to the subject. The first, that architecture, such as it flourished in Italy, at least away from the seaports, before the "Golden Age" of Leo X. revived Classicism, was something foreign to the country, imported by Lombard, German, and French builders, and as such never was brought to the same perfection, never achieved the same wonders as are to be seen in Germany, England, or Northern France;—the second, that when the great revolution of the sixteenth cen-

* Eandi, Saluzzo, i. 208–214. — Litta, Famiglie Celebri, Art. Monferrato, and Paleologhi Marchesi di Monferrato.

tury was effected, there arose in Italian hearts such a blind contempt for anything "Gothic," that every mediæval building would have been either destroyed or "embellished," but for the lack of means, which in some instances interfered with the "classical" zeal of the people.

Hence, of the old churches and town-halls of the Piedmontese towns, but little has been left untouched. The cathedral of Asti fell down in 1323, and was rebuilt, on a magnificent scale, before 1348; but the "Golden" age plastered over and bedaubed it with frescoes which do not so well harmonize with the original design. Of that of Casale, only the portal and vestibule remain; the rest was most fatally "beautified" in 1706, and one of the most singular Gothic antiquities of Italy, as we may judge from the surviving specimen, was miserably sacrificed.

Old churches are yet to be seen however in lurking-places at Acqui, Chieri, and Asti itself,—amongst them those round buildings which tradition points out as "pagan temples," but which are more probably early Lombard churches. Some of them, as at Chieri, Asti, and Novara, are still used as baptisteries; a very singular one has been turned into a wood-cellar at Biella. But none of them, in point of beauty or importance, may be named in the same breath with the glorious structures in the same style at Pisa, Florence, or Parma. The only really fine Gothic building in Piedmont has been preserved at Vercelli, in the church of St. Andrea.

It is not the cathedral, for the Vercellese clergy and people demolished that to make room for a grand modern Italian temple in the sixteenth century; nor did it owe its origin to the energy and liberality of republican times, but it was raised by the efforts of a single individual, who chose thus to consecrate his ill-gotten wealth to a work in which piety and patriotism had probably an equal share.

This was Cardinal Guala de' Bicchieri, a man to whom we may perhaps dedicate a few lines in this place, as we have omitted his name amongst the distinguished Piedmontese divines of mediæval renown. Guala, issued from a noble family of Vercelli, began his career by a great display of zeal against the Albigenses, shortly before the terrible crusade that was to annihilate them. He had a share, it is said*, in the momentous transactions by which the great king-tamer Innocent III. compelled Philip Augustus of France to take back his queen Ingeburga of Denmark, whom he had repudiated for the sake of Mary (or Agnes) of Meran, in 1201.

He next passed over to England as a papal legate, and there took the craven King John under his protection, defending him both against his rebel subjects and against Prince Louis of France, whom the barons of Runnymede had summoned to their aid in 1215. At a meeting with Philip Augustus, at Melun, in 1216, April 25, the Cardinal detached that King

* Denina, Italia Occidentale, i. 193.

and his court of peers from the English barons, induced them to disavow Prince Louis, and to withhold all assistance from him.

King John died soon afterwards (October 19th), and the Barons made their peace with his successor Henry III. The Prince Louis, at whose head the Legate never ceased to hurl the thunders of the Church, was fain to come to a truce with the new king, and, upon a renewal of hostilities, he was finally defeated in the following year.

These signal services, by which Guala saved the monarchy from utter overthrow, and perhaps the country from the undue influence of France, were handsomely rewarded in England. By the priory of St. Andrew, of Chester, and other rich benefices, he accumulated 12,000 marks of silver. On his return to Vercelli, in 1219, he employed this enormous wealth in building and founding the monastery, church, and hospital of St. Andrew.

He had a French architect, an ecclesiastic, in his suite; and the design of this latter, and possibly the Cardinal's own reminiscences of what he had seen in England, contributed to give his building a decidedly English character. Severe critics, indeed, find fault with the Romanesque façade, and a few round arches in the interior; but no church in Upper Italy is more one in design and execution. None has been less altered and tampered with; none exhibits less the effects of the ravages of time.

The Cardinal laid there, amongst other relics, part

of the sword by which Thomas à Becket suffered in 1170.

It would be rash to assert, that moral refinement everywhere kept pace with intellectual advancement. Yet, so far as mildness of the laws may be taken as an evidence of gentleness of manners, it would seem that the Middle Ages were already passing away in Piedmont, at the time it was re-united to Savoy under Amadeus VIII.

There is a singular edict of Louis, Prince of Achaia, of the 3rd of July, 1403*, by which the guilt of blasphemy and sabbath-breaking was only punishable by fines. In France, blasphemers had their tongues cut off, or pierced with red-hot irons. Even in Savoy, by the statutes of Amadeus VIII., of a later date (1430), similar offenders were severely flogged and pilloried, half naked, in the noon-tide heat, at the church door.

Up to this time, also, the burning of heretics had been of rare occurrence; and a diligent historian only meets with one instance of a similar occurrence at Turin in 1388†. But the fifteenth century was an age of deepening darkness, and Piedmont may be said to have gone back in such matters with the rest of the world. The heresy of the Hussites, which was supposed to foster political rebellion, gave rise to new acts of severity in the states of Savoy; and the insane charges of sorcery, necromancy, etc. etc., brought a vast multitude of deluded fanatics, or de-

* Datta, Principi d'Acaia, ii. 285.

† Cibrario, Economia Politica, ii. 30.

signing impostors, to the stake. We will, however, broadly assert, that all such infirmities always attained a higher degree of intensity in France than in Italy,—in Savoy than in Piedmont.

The above-mentioned humane decree of Louis of Achaia is not so remarkable for its penalties against such of his subjects as took the name of God or "the Virgin and Saints" in vain, as for the more severe chastisement with which it visits those who should dare to mention the "accursed names of Guelphs and Ghibelines;" names, the Prince thinks, "qui traxerunt originem ab illis duobus dampnatis principibus infernorum appellatis Gibel et Guelph." Such legislation was, indeed, not unprecedented in Italy; as by the statutes of Lucca, of 1371, it was equally forbidden to designate any family or person by those obnoxious party-names. The names, indeed, were forgotten, or lost their rancorous significance; but the demons of discord, which the good Piedmontese prince hoped to have laid for ever, too long continued to agitate Italian bosoms.

Even in Piedmont, however, the fierceness of an iron age, though smothered to a great extent, had still left deep traces.

The passions which no longer found vent in the turmoils of public life, were now concentrated on the narrower sphere of domestic intercourse. In the upper classes, revenge—the besetting sin of Italian hearts—still led to deeds of transcendant barbarism. Piedmont has its tragedies of as deep a dye as any we

read of in the annals of Pisa or Siena, as any that startle us in the pages of Dante.

Antonio Grimaldi, a nobleman of Chieri, had become convinced of the faithlessness of his wife.

He compelled her to hang up, with her own hand, her paramour to the ceiling of her chamber; he then had the chamber walled up, doors and windows, and only allowed the wretched woman as much air and light, and administered with his own hand as much food and drink, as would indefinitely prolong her agony: and so he watched her and tended her with all that solicitude which hatred can suggest as well as love, and left her to grope alone in that blind solitude, alone with that mute testimony of her guilt,—a ghastly object on which her aching eyes were riveted, day by day, night after night, till it had passed through every loathsome stage of decomposition*.

Again, there was, in 1452, war between Savoy and Milan.

Two nobles of Canavese, Bernard of Mazzè, and Ludovic of Valperga, lord of Ropolo, fought under the Savoy standard, and had risen to high renown in arms. Between them, for reasons unknown, intense enmity had long been cherished.

Mazzè fell into the hands of the enemy.

Valperga, profiting by a short suspension of hostilities, repaired to the camp of Milan to treat for the release of the prisoner, and obtained it. Mazzè was sent to the Ticino, and there delivered up to Anthony

* Costa de Beauregard, Maison Royale de Savoie, i. 211.

of Valperga, a brother of Ludovic, also a distinguished soldier in his times.

That was the last that was ever heard of Mazzè. His desolate wife roused the country with her alarms; she hastened backwards and forwards from one camp to the other, loudly calling for her husband: but the man was heard of no more. The Valperga had got hold of him by their deep-laid stratagem. One of them received him, a ransomed prisoner, at the Ticino; immediately afterwards he vanished from the earth. A skeleton in armour was, four hundred years later, discovered in the vaults of the castle of Ropolo, near Lake Viverone, on the road from Cavaglia to Ivrea, the seat of Ludovic Valperga. The discovery may give a grim confirmation to the popular surmise, that the unhappy Mazzè had been secretly conveyed thither, and met with some obscure, horrible death*.

These few cases of lawless violence must not, however, give us a false impression of the state of the country at the peculiar epoch we are now endeavouring to illustrate. Amadeus VIII. had closed the Middle Ages in Piedmont; but there was a visible relapse into barbarism after him. He had broken his nobles into sufficient submission; nor was it his fault if the reins, which he held tight in his hands, dropped from those of his successors. Those few families of Canavese, and of the upper valleys of Piedmont, were the only ones who still figured in the martial array of their sovereigns, and preserved some of the good and

* Cibrario, Economia Politica, i. 227.

bad qualities of a feudal aristocracy. But the great mass of the Piedmontese nobles consisted of the patricians of the towns, who had long been smoothed down into civilized life. Weaned from arms at too early a period, those burgher-nobles had laid aside, together with their steel-vestment, many also of those stern virtues which seemed best to thrive under it. As feudalism never struck deep roots into Italian soil, so neither did its bright side, chivalry. The nobles still had lands and castles, but most of them had become dwellers in towns, and had associated their interests with those of the community; they had even, in many instances, made over to it their lordly rights and prerogatives. The bulk of their wealth was invested in trade; but even Chieri and Asti could boast no princely merchants, such as flourished at Venice, Florence, or Genoa. The greatness and importance of those nobles fluctuated with the rise and fall of those petty communities: they had nothing of the solidity of real and inalienable property. When the tide of Italian prosperity ebbed, (and decline in the towns of Piedmont began with the loss of municipal freedom in the fifteenth century,) the nobles were left aground, impoverished, unemployed. The great purpose of their existence was gone. Some of them might have lands and castles to fall back upon; but the whole feudal edifice was here demolished; the country had lost its power; its owner was hopelessly estranged from it. The noble had nothing left but to wile away his dreary idleness amidst the dulness and squalor of

a decaying town. Refinement of manners wore out his spirit, luxury made him inert and voluptuous, conceited, frivolous. The whole race dwindled and stooped. Some of the most enterprising went abroad in quest of adventure; at home they rotted.

Thus, especially at the age we refer to, the court of Savoy was made up of the Savoyards themselves, or of the castled nobility of old Piedmont, Aosta, Ivrea. The patricians of the towns hardly appear as court-minions; perhaps because they disdained to wear the livery, perhaps because they shrank from the martial trials to which that court loved to put its followers.

The heirs of Amadeus VIII., dukes of Savoy, had therefore little to fear from aristocratic insubordination.

Republican times had done not a little in Italy towards producing that dead level upon which absolutism can best build its edifice. The Piedmontese were, of all people in Italy, the one amongst whom intensity of public life was most rapidly abating; on which, therefore, a new social order might be most easily established. It was neither the first nor the second generation of tyrants that could sit easy on the throne of Milan, Florence, or Parma; nor could the throne itself have been reared, in many instances, without the overwhelming interference of a foreign force. Everywhere in Italy there was long chafing and struggling. Every untoward event—the death of a prince, the march of a hostile army—was hailed as the signal of revolt. Even when rebellion was quenched, con-

spiracy would still be at work. Reft of his sword, the Italian had still his dagger,—a desperate, but by no means contemptible weapon, as Visconti and Sforza, Medici and Farnese, could attest. The Italian protested to the last,—he is still protesting. He was caged, but not tamed: as the poet characterized him, he was

> "The stubborn, sullen, ever-fretting slave."

But in the West, how striking the difference! Piedmont acquiesced in her new destinies, at once and for ever.

She accepted the Princes of Savoy as her native, legitimate rulers.

She was passively obedient to them in ordinary times,—heroically loyal in days of adversity.

CHAPTER VII.

DECLINE OF SAVOY.

Such was the State which Amadeus VIII. of Savoy gave up to the management of his son, Louis, at the epoch of his retirement to Ripaille, in 1434, and which he resigned altogether on his exaltation to the Papacy in 1440.

From that time to the year 1559, there is for Savoy only a period of sad, inglorious decline; and because there is always something painful in the contemplation of the downfall of any human edifice, we shall endeavour to condense this part of our subject so far as may be consistent with the general plan of this work.

In the first place, the House itself of Savoy was false to its destinies.

The Dukes had sadly fallen off from the brilliant spirit and unwearied energy of the Counts.

From the death of Amadeus VIII. in 1451, to the restoration of Emanuel Philibert in 1559, no less than eight dukes ascended the throne. Only a few of them

showed themselves worthy of their race. Those few either hardly came to man's estate, or were snatched away at the outset of their career, or attained power only at its close. Some vigour was still exhibited by the minor sons, or collateral branches of the House, legitimate or otherwise; but that was too often turned to the detriment of the House itself, no less than to the utter confusion of the state.

This melancholy period opens with the reign of Louis, which lasted a quarter of a century (1440–1465), during which that weak prince suffered the state to fall into the utmost disorder at home, and abroad subjected it to great humiliation, and lost the best opportunities for its further aggrandisement.

It was followed by that of Louis's eldest son, Amadeus IX. "the Blessed" (1465–1472), during the best part of whose reign, and immediately after whose death, the intestine discords which had commenced under Louis, raged with increasing violence.

Amadeus IX. left two sons: Philibert I. "the Hunter" (1472–1482), who was only six years old at his father's demise, and died in his sixteenth year; and Charles I. "the Warrior" (1482–1490), a youth of fourteen at his accession, whose reign did not extend beyond a period of seven years.

His heir, Charles John Amadeus, or Charles II. (1490–1496), was only aged nine months, and died in his seventh year.

The throne was now occupied by Philip II. (1496–1497), the fourth of the sons of Duke Louis, one of

the proudest and most turbulent spirits of his House, who agitated the state during the reigns of his father, his brother, his nephews, and his grand-nephew, and at last, in his fifty-eighth year, reached the supreme power he had so long coveted, but only held it eighteen months. He was succeeded by two of his sons, Philibert II. "the Fair" (1497–1504), and Charles III. the "Good" or "the Unfortunate" (1504–1553), whose reign of half a century brought his House and state to utter ruin.

The troubles of Savoy under Duke Louis began soon after the retirement of his father to Ripaille, and became very serious soon after his exaltation to the Pontificate.

There is no doubt that the ruin of Savoy may originally be traced to the fatal resolution of Amadeus VIII. himself.

He relinquished the reins of government in his fifty-first year, in full possession of his faculties and energies, and left them in the hands of a man whose softness and pusillanimity had probably caused him some uneasiness.

He had only nominally emancipated his son, and only formally abdicated the Duchy in his favour; for to limited minds like Louis's there is no real enfranchisement, and he was one of those princes who reign but govern not. Consequently Amadeus had contrived that his son's conduct should always be under control of his own master-mind: but the distance from Ripaille, or Basle, or Lausanne, to Turin, with

the Alps intervening, was, in those times, very considerable; and Amadeus's mind, however vast, was taken up with world-wide schemes, in which the affairs of Savoy could play but a subordinate part. His religious practices, besides, (he heard three masses daily, attended matins, vespers, and all other prayers of the monks, and two days in the week were entirely dedicated to ascetic contemplation*,) allowed him but little leisure for worldly concerns. The state of Savoy suffered also very severely from being made a stepping-stone to Amadeus's exaltation to the Pontificate. It had to bear all the expenses of election: it had to supply the means for the pomp and grandeur of a pope without a popedom. Its policy was diverted from its ordinary channel; it was made subservient to extraneous interests, involved in unnecessary difficulties.

It had been a wise policy of Amadeus VIII., whose minority had been so sorely disturbed by the conflicting pretensions of his mother and grandmother (both French princesses), to avoid all connections with the court of France, by choosing a daughter-in-law out of the family of a distant and harmless potentate.

This was Anne of Lusignan, daughter of Janus, King of Cyprus. The Duke had destined her for his eldest son, Amadeus, Prince of Piedmont. But this prince died in 1431, and the Cyprian princess fell to the second son, together with all other expectations of the deceased prince. The union took place in 1433.

* Amadeus Pacificus, p. 152.

Endowed with uncommon beauty, and with a brilliant, high, imperious spirit, Anne of Cyprus immediately assumed an undue ascendancy over her husband's weak nature.

Æneas Sylvius (Pope Pius II.), a good judge of men, very aptly characterized the ducal couple, by saying that "a woman who never could obey, had been married to a man who never knew how to command." She filled her husband's court with her own Greek and Cyprian minions, and squandered her husband's treasures both upon them and upon her needy relatives in her native island. A convoy of hers intended for Cyprus, (if old chroniclers deserve any credit*,) under pretence of sending a sample of the goat-cheese of Savoy, was intercepted by her adversaries, and found to hide, under a thin layer of that mountain-delicacy, a large quantity of gold and precious stones, which the crafty princess thus smuggled out of the country.

Even on the native nobility Anne's favours were bestowed rather with regard to an agreeable exterior and a flattering address, than to the real worth or eminent services of the candidates. The nobles of Savoy had been managed only by the consummate skill and firmness of Amadeus VIII., and weaned from their independent castle-life by being called round the throne rather as associates than subjects; and looked upon the high offices at court, or in the state and army, as their own birthright. They were now highly in-

* Bonnivard's Chronique, ii. 38.

dignant at the blind partiality shown either to strangers, or to men of no rank—at any rate of little merit. A strong faction, hostile to the Duchess and her favourites, soon mustered under the guidance of John of Seyssel, Marshal of Savoy, and of Francis de la Palud, Lord of Varembon. The court-party, on the other hand, had at its head John of Compey, Lord of Thorens, a man with no other claims to the overweening credit he enjoyed, than the accomplishments of a "carpet knight," the ornament of the ball-room or the tilting-yard.

The court and the whole country became the theatre of daily encounters between these emulous chiefs and their supporters. Matters went so far, that at a hunting-party in the woods of Mornay, on Mount Salève, in October, 1446, swords were drawn in the presence of the Duke and some of the princesses, and Compey was wounded*.

Louis was now driven to proceed against his turbulent vassals, and issued sentences of banishment and confiscation. But the popularity of the Barons, as opponents of the Cyprian party, rendered them more than a match for their sovereign, and the contest would have been one of doubtful issue, had not Amadeus VIII. or Felix V. stepped in between the parties, leaving Basle for the purpose, and, by an amnesty to the proscribed barons, effected a reconciliation at Thonon.

* Costa de Beauregard, Jun., Familles Historiques de Savoie, Seigneurs de Compey, p. 51.

But Amadeus died in 1451, and Compey regained his ascendancy. The imbecile but vindictive Duke now revoked his decree of amnesty, once more drove his opponents from the country, and even sent his herald to claim back from them the knightly orders which they had won by their valour.

The nobles had recourse now to the King of France.

Charles VII., always happy to meddle in the affairs of Savoy, which he would fain have looked upon as a French fief, had besides, at the present juncture, grievances of his own against Duke Louis. The King was then at open war with the Dauphin, his son, afterwards Louis XI., who had retired to his own states of Dauphiny, and had, on the 14th of February, 1451, against the King's wishes, betrothed Charlotte, daughter of Louis of Savoy.

The King therefore sent his commissioners to inquire into the grievances of the proscribed barons, bade Louis receive them again into favour, and marched with an army to the frontier, to enforce his mandates.

Louis was not the man to dream of resistance. He went over to France, met the King at Cleppié, and by a treaty dated here, October 27, 1452, he gave in to all his demands. As a reward for his compliance, he obtained a ratification of the Dauphin's marriage with his own daughter, and at the same time negotiated that of Amadeus, his son, Prince of Piedmont, with Yolande of France, the King's daughter.

The disturbances of the court of Savoy were, however, by no means at an end. Charles VII. had again and again to interfere, till at length a compromise between the parties was brought about by French commissioners, at Chambéry, on the 27th of March, 1455.

One of the chief subjects of discontent among the haughty nobility of Savoy, was the elevation of men of humbler rank, who were brought to a level with them by new-fangled titles, and made to share their power.

A distinguished victim to this rancorous feeling was William of Bolomier, one of those pen-men and lawyers by whom, as we have seen, Amadeus VIII. attempted to substitute right for might in his states. Bolomier, by birth a "very small gentleman, or no gentleman at all," had been private secretary to the Duke Amadeus VIII., had been trusted by him with the most important missions, and had been chiefly instrumental in his elevation to the Pontificate. He had now risen to the dignity of Chancellor, or perhaps only Vice-Chancellor of Savoy. He had incurred the severe displeasure of the aristocratic party, especially of its leader, Francis de la Palud, Lord of Varembon, a man of violent and savage disposition. By some underhand intrigues, which will never be sufficiently cleared up, the latter found the means of bringing the unhappy Chancellor before a court of law on a charge of calumny against himself, and obtained a capital sentence against him, which was executed by drowning

in the Lake of Geneva, off Chillon, on the 13th of August, 1446*.

This was little more than two months before the great outbreak of the same nobles against John of Compey—a circumstance which sufficiently explains the fact that neither the Duke nor Felix V. appear in any manner to have exerted themselves to save the Chancellor from his fate, or to avenge it. It is evident that the Barons had gained the upperhand, and the court had to bow to their arrogance.

The evil, however, became far more grievous when those turbulent nobles found support among the very sons of their sovereign.

Anne of Cyprus had borne seventeen children to the Duke: ten of these were sons. Amadeus, the eldest, Prince of Piedmont, and destined to the succession, meek, pious, and sickly, lived in retirement at Bourg-en-Bresse. He has been all but canonized by the Church in later times, and goes by the name of Amadeus "the Blessed."

Three other sons, Peter, John Louis, and Francis, were destined to the Church, and all successively appointed to the See of Geneva.

The second son, Louis, married Charlotte, daughter of John of Lusignan, and was crowned King of Cyprus, in 1459.

The third, James, had the county of Geneva or Genevois for his appanage. The ninth, James, was made Count of Romont, and obtained the Barony of Vaud.

* Denina, Italia Occid. ii. 138.—Cibrario, Studi Storici, ii. 411.

The fourth, Philip, bore or gave himself the title of "Lackland," but was eventually appanaged in Baugé and Bresse, became Count of Bresse, and came at last to the throne of Savoy, as Philip II.*

All these three laymen, but especially Philip, were youths of high spirit and valour, but restless, stubborn, ambitious. At a very early age they had learnt to despise their father, and rose in rebellion against him: they put themselves at the head of the discontented barons, and of what was called—in opposition to the Cyprian minions of the Duchess—the 'National' party.

Philip's hatred was chiefly directed against John de Varax, master of the Duchess's household, who by the favour of that princess had been made Marquis of St. Sorlin, and even, it is supposed, one of the Marshals of Savoy, as also against James of Valperga, Chancellor of Savoy.

The enmity broke forth in a terrific manner.

The Castle of Thonon was stormily entered by the hot-headed young prince at the head of his partisans. The Duke was at his prayers in the chapel, the Duchess confined to her bed by an illness, which shortly afterwards proved fatal.

Philip possessed himself of the persons of his foes: and at the very moment that he was called into his father's presence, and obeyed the summons, he whispered to his attendants an order to despatch Varax.

* Gingins-la-Sarraz, Episodes des Guerres de Bourgogne: Mémoires et Documens de la Société d'Histoire de la Suisse Romande, viii. 418.

The order was promptly executed. Valperga was hurried away across the Lake to Morges, and there subjected to a mock trial, and condemned to die the very death which William of Bolomier had met in those same waters, sixteen years before. He was sent to the bottom of the lake with a heavy stone round his neck, and, whatever historians may say to the contrary*, never rose again.

Whilst violent hands were thus laid on two of the highest officers of state, the Prince, in his mother's apartment, and at the foot of her bed of suffering, was bearing, unmoved, all the brunt of his father's wrath; who, however, contented himself with vain rebuke and threat, but suffered him to depart unhurt.

Nay, it is even said that the Prince brought to light his father's treasure, which the Duchess's Greek courtiers had secreted, ready to remove it on her demise, and that he threw one after another the bags of gold at his father's feet, bidding him see how shamefully he allowed himself to be robbed†.

All this happened early in October, 1462. Before the 9th of November, public opinion had declared in favour of the undutiful prince. The bold, dashing qualities of Philip won over to his cause the very officers who were sent to oppose him; he was looked upon as the champion of national interests, and the States-General, assembled at Geneva, interceded in his

* Guichenon, Royale Maison de Savoie, ii. 165.—Galli, Cariche del Piemonte, i. 26.—Costa de Beauregard, Jun., Seigneurs de Compey, p. 30.

† Sismondi, Histoire des Français, viii. 272.

behalf, and prevailed on the weak Duke to grant him a pardon, which was extended to all his accomplices.

Only two days later, November 11th, Anne of Cyprus died at Geneva, doubtless hurried to her grave by the scenes of violence which she had all but witnessed with her own eyes at Thonon. There was now an end of Louis's authority in his own state, and, as in former occurrences, he had recourse to that fatal expedient, the protection of France.

Louis XI. had, in the previous year, 1461, succeeded his father on the French throne.

The Duke of Savoy visited him at St. Cloud, and obtained from him even such assistance as might be expected from a man of Louis's character.

He enticed Philip to his court by the fairest tenders of safe-conduct and declarations of goodwill, had him arrested at Vierzon, April 3rd, 1464, and threw him into his own state-prison, the Castle of Loches, on the Indre, where the young prince was left in durance for two years.

Louis of Savoy did not long survive his son's imprisonment. Pressed by the Dukes of Burgundy, Brittany, and others, to join in the "league of the public weal," against Louis XI., he not only rejected their advances, but pushed his zeal so far as to cross over to Lyons, on his way to the King, whom he wished to apprise of the proceedings of his enemies. He fell ill in that town, and died January 29th, 1465.

The reign of his successor, Amadeus IX., only aggravated the disorders of the state.

This "blessed" Duke, already unfitted for the cares of state by his grovelling piety, was further disabled by epileptic fits, which, in March, 1469, necessitated the appointment of a Regency.

His wife, Yolande of France, was placed at its head, and through her the King, her brother, obtained an almost absolute control over the affairs of Savoy.

Philip of Bresse had in the meantime been released from his confinement at Loches. He joined his brothers the Counts of Romont and Geneva, and put forth pretensions to a share in the regency. The Princes were backed by a large party, jealous of the independence of their country, and uneasy at the rapid encroachments of France. Beside this national support, the Princes had also on their side Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, who had governed that state in his father's name since 1465, and succeeded him in 1467; and who had already entered into that competition with Louis XI. which was to end in his own destruction.

The Princes appealed to arms. They invaded Savoy, and compelled the infirm Duke and the Duchess Regent to withdraw to their strong castle of Montmeillan. The impetuous Count of Bresse, Philip, even took that by surprise, and gained possession of the Duke. Yolande made her escape, and took refuge in Dauphiny. The King her brother came forward to her rescue, and a French army marched upon Savoy, along the valley of Grésivaudan.

Here the Deputies of Bern and Friburg stepped forward as mediators. The Princes were compelled

to yield (September 5th, 1471). The Duchess was restored to the regency, but the Princes had a share in the appointment of her council.

Amadeus IX., in the meanwhile, ever longing for a quiet life, abandoned Savoy, and retired to Vercelli, where he died, March 30th, 1472.

The regency of Yolande was now prolonged during the minority of her son, Philibert I. She met again with opposition from her violent brothers-in-law, and was equally distracted by the offers and threats of the two emulous potentates, Louis of France and Charles of Burgundy, who both wished to rule over Savoy through her, and to enlist that state in their quarrels.

Again the Princes drew their swords—again they drove the Regent from Chambéry; Montmeillan was once more besieged and taken. The young Duke, Philibert, fell into their hands: Yolande fled, and her differences with her relatives were settled by foreign mediation. Yolande resumed her place at the head of the regency, upon condition that one of the princes of the blood—John Louis, Bishop of Geneva,—should be admitted into the council.

In the meanwhile the great drama of Charles the Bold was being performed in Burgundy.

Louis XI., too wary, even in his animosity, to "seize a mad dog by the ears," had armed Austria and the Swiss to the destruction of his dreaded antagonist.

He himself had been at peace with Charles since 1472, and affected a neutrality which prescribed a similar conduct for his sister, the Regent of Savoy.

Urged on all sides to join the contending parties, Yolande would indeed have wished to remain a passive spectator of the impending struggle.

She was fully as deep a politician as her wily brother, and she saw in the ascendancy of Charles of Burgundy a good chance for the emancipation of herself and her state from French thraldom.

The Duke of Burgundy, on the other hand, was lavish of splendid promises. He tendered her the hand of his only daughter, Mary of Burgundy, for the young Duke Philibert, her son; proposing thus a union which would at once have raised Savoy to the rank of the greatest monarchies, and extended its possessions from the Scheldt to the Mediterranean.

The Princes, her brothers-in-law, had in the meanwhile committed Yolande in spite of herself. The high-minded Count of Bresse had never forgiven Louis XI. his treachery and his own imprisonment at Loches. He had early attached himself to Charles the Bold, and even been present at that famous interview of Peronne (October 9th, 1468), in which the subtle king had been outwitted by a burst of passion of his blundering antagonist, and only escaped from his hands by grievous sacrifices, and after the greatest humiliation. Even more zealous in the cause of Burgundy was James, Count of Romont, who had conceived a romantic attachment for Charles the Bold, an attachment which never belied itself even after the fall and death of the object of his admiration.

The Count of Romont was so hasty in his demon-

strations in favour of Burgundy as to draw upon himself the displeasure of the Swiss, who carried the war into his own territory of Vaud. Savoy, or at least its dependency, became thus the theatre of hostilities, and Yolande, now driven into the contest, supplied her own contingent to the army of Burgundy.

Charles the Bold was prostrated at Grandson, March 2nd, 1476, and at Morat, June 22nd of the same year.

Fearing now that his disasters might induce the Regent of Savoy to declare for her enemies, he laid a scheme to have her apprehended with her children.

This succeeded only by half. The Duchess was taken, on her way from Gex to Geneva, together with her daughters and one of her younger sons, and conveyed to the castle of Rouvres in Burgundy; but the main prize, the Duke Philibert, now eleven years old, eluded his captors, owing to the dexterity of his tutor Godfrey of Rivarolo, and reached Chambéry in safety.

Louis XI. had now Savoy utterly at his mercy.

The States-General at Chambéry, indignant at the conduct of Charles of Burgundy, and in dread of the resentment of the victorious Swiss, had no resource left but to place the country under the King's protection.

The princes of the blood themselves, the Bishop of Geneva, and even the implacable Count of Bresse, were charged with this tender of submission, and, at an interview they had with the King at Roanne, they made, as they best could, their peace with him*.

* Sismondi, Histoire des Français, viii. 452.

Louis took possession of Chambéry and Montmeillan, and appointed the two Princes to the government—the Bishop of Geneva in Savoy, the Count of Bresse in Piedmont.

Presently, by a *coup de main*, the King freed his sister from the castle of Rouvres, forgave her defection, and welcomed her to his own residence of Plessis-les-Tours: hence he restored her to the regency (November 2, 1476), and sent her back to Savoy, where the Princes made room for her and allowed her peacefully to resume her authority; so irresistible had by this time the King's will become in Savoy.

The government of Yolande suffered no new disturbances, but ended with her life, August 27, 1478, at Moncrivello, on the Dora Baltea, in the province of Vercelli.

Her son, Duke Philibert I., was still a minor. The King disposed of Savoy as if it were one of his own French provinces, and he appointed the Count de la Chambre and the Sire of Miolans to the government (September 13th, 1478). The outrageous conduct of La Chambre raised a strong party against him, especially in Piedmont, at the head of which the princes of the blood now regained their ascendancy.

Henceforth there was civil war and anarchy in Savoy, over which even the King's power had no control, as both parties professed to act in his name, and the differences were often referred to his arbitrament. In the midst of these disorders the young Duke fell into the hands now of one, now of another, of the

hostile parties, and died at last at Lyons on the 22nd of April, 1482, of excessive fatigue in the chase, a victim to that fondness for field-sports which won him the surname of the "Hunter."

His brother Charles was only fourteen years old at this juncture.

He found Piedmont in the hands of Philip, Count of Bresse, who was unwilling to relinquish the government. But the opposition of that prince was overcome, and the young Duke, still under the King's guardianship, and by his support, triumphed over all his adversaries.

Louis XI. died August 30th, 1483, and was succeeded by his son Charles VIII., who was only thirteen years old. Savoy was at last released from the bondage in which France had held it for nearly thirty years. The young prince Charles I., now declared to be of age, developed such energies and such firmness of character, as not only subjected to him the rebellious vassals and party leaders, who had hitherto torn the state asunder, but won him also the respect of his neighbours, and enabled him to uphold the dignity of his independent crown against the pretensions of France itself.

He had especially to contend against Louis II. of Saluzzo, who had succeeded his father, Louis I., in 1475, and who, following a policy but too common with the princes of his house, now fell off from his allegiance to Savoy and put himself under the protection of France. The Duke of Savoy routed his enemy

in repeated encounters, and took many of the towns and the capital itself of Saluzzo (1486–1489). But Charles VIII. of France now put forth his authority as liege sovereign of the Marquisate, and was even on the point of marching an army against Savoy, when the young Duke, resolving to throw himself upon his justice and magnanimity, went with a suite of 1400 horses to France, met the King at Tours, April to July, 1489*, and their difference was referred to arbitrament. Charles of Savoy returned now to his states, but fell ill at Pinerolo, of poison, as some suppose, administered to him by an emissary of the Marquis of Saluzzo, and died on the 13th of March, 1490†.

Charles I., named "the Warrior," left at his death a son, named Charles John Amadeus, or Charles II., only nine months old. But he left him in the care of a wife in every respect worthy of him; this was Blanche of Montferrat, daughter of the Marquis William VIII. She found herself encompassed with troubles in every quarter. The regency had been adjudged to her by the States-General; but she conciliated the goodwill of the princes of the blood by appointing two of them, Francis, the youngest son of Duke Louis, now Archbishop of Auch, and Philip of Bresse, lieutenants-general in Savoy and Piedmont. By this wise course she interested them in the maintenance of the public peace, so that when the Count

* Sismondi, Histoire des Français, ix. 111.

† Costa de Beauregard, Maison Royale de Savoie, i. 285.—Cibrario, Torino, i. 303.

de la Chambre and other partisans, ventured on new disturbances, Philip of Bresse repeatedly put forth his might, and drove them from the country.

In all these interminable dissensions in the state of Savoy, in which we see reproduced, on a smaller scale, the disorders of the war of the Roses of England, and of the Armagnacs and Burgundians in France, we have reason to be surprised to hear scarcely any mention of Piedmont.

The Transalpine nobles and the princes of the blood appear almost exclusively on the stage. Of the Piedmontese scarcely any, or only the Valperga, Rivarolo, and a few others of the castled nobility of Canavese, and the Sires of Pancalieri, Racconigi and Cavour, who were of the same blood with the reigning House (descended from a natural son of Louis, the last Prince of Achaia), and who had been appanaged in Piedmont. One of them, Claude of Racconigi, took a prominent part in all those courtly turmoils, as a partisan of the Count de la Chambre and of Louis II. of Saluzzo.

The Duke Louis paid hardly any attention to Piedmont during his reign.

Amadeus IX. and his widow, Yolande, only came to this part of their dominions when, worn out by the troubles of Savoy, they sought that peace which a comparatively quiet and orderly country could best afford them.

Piedmont was for half a century a mere dependency, a conquered territory. Destitute of a wealthy and

powerful, above all things, a warlike nobility, she could hardly have a vote in the stormy debates of a strictly feudal community. The towns had only bargained for the maintenance of their own local liberties. In the general government but little share was given to them, and they hardly claimed any.

Matters, however, rapidly changed.

The frequent meetings of the States-General made the Third Estate aware of its own importance. In these assemblies the Piedmontese soon outnumbered their Transalpine fellow-subjects; and the wealth of their towns gave them great weight, whenever the States were applied to for a vote of supplies. The Piedmontese felt that they were something in the state; a part of it—the best part—that is, the richest and most enlightened. Even during the regency of Yolande of France, it had been deemed good policy to admit some Piedmontese nobles into her council, in 1471*. But the appointment of Blanche of Montferrat to the regency gave rise to the most violent outbreaks, and even to scenes of bloodshed, at Turin, and the Duchess was compelled to escape with her infant son to Pinerolo†. The two nations were actually in presence, and nothing but the dread of impending public calamities would have prevented open hostilities. The Piedmontese, however, carried their point. They were received into the Council of Regency on equal terms, and demanded moreover that the Duchess

* Guichenon, Royale Maison de Savoie, ii. 130.

† Cibrario, Torino, i. 304.

and her infant son should reside on their side of the mountains, and that the education of the latter should be entrusted to one of their nation.

This was Merlo of Piossasco, Admiral of Rhodes, the head of a family which had given no less than fifty-nine knights to that illustrious Order*.

The wisdom and moderation of Blanche of Montferrat put an end to the civil dissensions of Savoy. Her infant son died of a fall in his seventh year, and Philip of Bresse, the great agitator, was peacefully acknowledged as the legitimate successor of his grand-nephew (1496–1497). The two sons of Philip, Philibert II. in 1497, and Charles III. in 1504, were, although young, both out of their minority at their accession.

We have purposely limited our attention to these intestine discords of Savoy, mixing up with them as little as possible of the great general vicissitudes in which the state was involved, with a hope that our narrative may proceed with greater clearness and expedition. It may be imagined, however, that a country so perpetually unsettled by domestic quarrels, would conduct its foreign policy with no steady hand. It has been justly remarked†, that, although free from any serious external reverse, the reign of Duke Louis was the very one in which the authority of the sovereign made the most retrograde steps, and the one in which it enjoyed the least credit amongst its neighbours.

* Costa de Beauregard, Maison Royale de Savoie, i. 229.

† *Ibid.* i. 272.

Truly, during that fatal quarter of a century, Savoy lost time which could never be retrieved.

It was the epoch of the formation of great monarchies. In that great work of construction Amadeus VIII. of Savoy had taken the lead, and had the start of all his rivals. His own reign coincides with that of Charles VII. of France, and that of Duke Louis with that of Louis XI. This latter made France what it now is. He crushed the great vassals one by one, united the great fiefs to the crown, and bequeathed to his son Charles VIII. a compact kingdom, with which he might have conquered the world.

Now the building up of France was sure to lead to the ruin of Savoy.

Even without opposing that power by might of arms, it was the duty of a wise ruler of Savoy to avoid all connection with it, and to seek his friends among its natural enemies. Instead of this, we have seen the short-sighted Louis binding up the destinies of his House with that of France, by a double matrimonial alliance, and shunning all co-operation with that princely "League of the Public Weal," which still hoped to uphold the interests of feudalism against all-absorbing despotism.

Under Amadeus IX., and with a Duchess Regent so closely related to the French monarch, the withdrawal of Savoy from French influence had become far more difficult.

The rivalry between Louis XI. and Charles the Bold of Burgundy offered, however, a good opportu-

nity, and Yolande of France was Savoyard enough to sacrifice the ties of blood to the interests of her adopted country. Unfortunately, the quarrel between her brother and Burgundy was soon hushed up, and the real war broke out between Charles the Bold on one side, and Austria and the Swiss on the other.

Now to back Burgundy against France would have been sufficiently easy and natural. But the alternative between Burgundy and the Swiss gave rise to far more dangerous complications.

The Swiss had always shown themselves the best friends of Savoy. Only a short time previously (June 10th, 1452), Friburg, throwing up the allegiance it had for one hundred and eighty-seven years paid to the House of Habsburg, had put itself under the patronage and high dominion of Savoy*. Even more recently, in 1471, the domestic dissensions of Savoy had been set at rest by the timely interference of the friendly and devoted cities of Bern and Friburg. A war with the Swiss, whilst France kept up its silent and observant attitude, was a very impolitic and hazardous game. Savoy was also not in the best condition to take the field on either side. The papacy of Felix V., the extravagances of Anne of Cyprus, had exhausted its treasury. The favouritism of Louis, or of his Grecian duchess, had alienated the nobility; the appanages to his numerous progeny had dismembered the state, and placed Bresse, Genevois, and Vaud almost on an independent footing. Some perplexity

* Berchthold, Canton Fribourg, i. 342.

on the part of the Regent was therefore quite excusable; and perhaps a strict, and consistent, and well-armed neutrality might have saved the state. But the princes of the blood allowed Yolande no time for hesitation. Through the different passes of the Alps, and especially across the St. Bernard and the Simplon, they drew large bands of Lombard and Neapolitan auxiliaries—those base hirelings on whom Charles the Bold had placed his firmest reliance, and the vindictive treachery of one of whom—it grieves an Italian to the heart to have to avow it—had so great a share in his disasters. The passage of those troops, resisted by the Valaisans, led to the first hostilities. Yolande sent an army into Valais, and laid siege to Sion—that episcopal town which had so often yielded to the efforts of the Counts of Savoy. The place was, even in this last instance, reduced to extremities; but 3000 Bernese, allies of the Valaisans, came down from the Oberland, and the host of Savoy, more than three times stronger, was repulsed, November 13th, 1475*.

The Valaisans followed up their advantage, burnt the castles of Conthey, Saillon, and Saxon, and took possession of Martigny (November 29th). By this time the Bernese and their allies, who had already met the Count of Romont in the ranks of their Burgundian foes, and beaten him at Héricourt (November 13th, 1474), now carried the war into his own terri-

* Gingins-la-Sarraz, Développement du Haut Vallais et conquête du Bas Vallais, Archiv für Schweitzerische Geschichte, iii. 139.—Boccard, Hist. du Vallais, p. 139.

tory, and Vaud was delivered up to terrific military execution*. On the same occasion, the Bernese had equally ravaged Lower Valais, and taken possession of St. Maurice. It was with a view to bring relief to his heroic ally of Romont that Charles the Bold undertook the fatal campaigns which led to Grandson and Morat. The double defeat of the Burgundians left those unfortunate provinces of Vaud and Lower Valais, already miserably torn and bleeding, once more at the mercy of the Swiss conquerors.

But the utter ruin of Savoy did not enter into the plans of the victorious Swiss; nor would Louis XI. of France have allowed them to push their conquests too far into a country which was thus unavoidably falling into his own hands. He took up the reins of the government of Savoy, and negotiated for this State a truce with the Swiss. This led to the Congress of Friburg (August 14, 1476), in which it was settled that the barony of Vaud should be restored to Savoy, on condition that the Count of Romont should be perpetually excluded from it, and that it should not again be detached as an appanage from the lands of Savoy.

Several towns of that province, especially the glorious battle-fields of Grandson and Morat, and some towns of Chablais, such as Aigle, Bex, etc., remained in the hands of the Bernese. St. Maurice, Martigny, with the best part of Lower Valais, were, by subse-

* Gingins-la-Sarraz, Guerre de Bourgogne, Mémoires de la Suisse Romande, viii. 173.—Verdeil, Canton de Vaud, i. 292.

quent treaties at Friburg and Annecy, made over to the Bishop of Sion, that is, to the Valaisans.

In those repeated inroads of the Savoy provinces, the Swiss used their victory with unsparing cruelty; for the war of Burgundy was a conflict of classes, and the Swiss democrats had many a taunt to avenge upon the haughty Vaudois nobility. Whole garrisons were put to the sword, and their commanders slain in cold blood. In Vaud alone, "sixteen towns, forty-three castles, and numberless villages were laid in ruins*."

It was with great regret that the Swiss renounced possession of the sweet lands on the north bank of Lake Leman, and it was not long before they found an opportunity of regaining it. The peace between them and Savoy was, for the next fifty years, hollow and precarious. Nevertheless, the force of old associations, and the common danger from the towering ambition of France, made them loth to come to an open rupture with Savoy. In his wars against Saluzzo in 1486, Charles I. of Savoy still had under his standard 2000 auxiliaries from Bern and Friburg†.

The Swiss, however, were not the only safeguard of Savoy against France.

Charles the Bold of Burgundy had been laid low at Nancy (January 5, 1477), and at his death his duchy of Burgundy, and a large share of its dependencies, had fallen to the lot of his crafty enemy, Louis XI.

* Verdeil, Canton de Vaud, i. 337.

† Guichenon, Royale Maison de Savoie, ii. 153.

But his daughter, Mary of Burgundy, had brought Flanders, Artois, and Franche Comté as her dowry to Maximilian, archduke of Austria, son of Frederic III. The House of Habsburg was now, on its western frontier, for a long tract, in contact with France, whilst its southern borders were limited by the Savoy provinces of Bresse and Genevois. It was in the power, and it was for the vital interest, of Savoy to ally itself with this new natural enemy of France; but the influence of the long reign of Louis XI. had perverted the judgment of the descendants of Amadeus VIII. The Count of Romont alone continued true to the cause of Mary of Burgundy, and was but indifferently requited by the selfish Austrian, her husband; but the other princes of the blood bound themselves by new ties to the House of France, and had but too brilliant a share in the exploits by which that nation found its way into Italy, by first treading down the lands of Savoy.

Even Philip of Bresse, who had been more or less openly the bitterest enemy of Louis XI., hastened to make his peace with his successor, and himself and several of his high-mettled sons fought foremost in the ranks of Charles VIII. Philip married into the Houses of Bourbon and Brittany, and gave his daughter, the too-famous Louise of Savoy, to Charles of Valois, Count of Angoulême, of whom was born Francis I., that knightly king, who dealt the *coup-de-grâce* to Savoy.

The policy of Savoy, south of the Alps, had, in the fifteenth century, been an equally losing game.

Philip Maria Visconti died in 1447, leaving his beautiful state without an acknowledged heir.

There had been a time, we have not forgotten it, when Amadeus VIII. had contemplated the annexation of the whole, or the best part, of the duchy of Milan to his own state, and the formation of a powerful kingdom in Northern Italy. But his moderation had induced him to adjourn his great project; he had perceived that, even if he succeeded in wresting Milan from Visconti, he would have either to share, or to contend for it, with his Venetian and Florentine allies. He was therefore (1427) satisfied with the acquisition of Vercelli; and having made terms with Philip Maria, he courted the most intimate connection with him.

The Duke of Milan had no sons, indeed no legitimate children.

Amadeus VIII., his father-in-law, aspired to become his heir.

In the year 1434, in April, he sent a deputation to Milan, the very soul of which was that William de Bolomier, his private secretary, whose tragic end we have recorded. He offered to Visconti all the power of Savoy in support of the integrity of his duchy, always threatened by Venice and other redoubtable foes, upon condition of a mutual reversion of the respective states upon each of the contracting powers, on the demise of the other without legitimate heirs. As Philip Maria was childless, and Amadeus blessed with a very numerous progeny, it is easy to foresee the probable result of such an arrangement.

Philip Maria Visconti was too slippery a character to fall in with the views of his father-in-law, even if these clearly aimed at his own security. He gave the Savoy messengers evasive answers, and threw himself more and more helplessly into the hands of Francesco Sforza, who was first to undermine, then to inherit his power.

It was nevertheless stipulated that, upon the decease of Visconti without a male heir, part of his dukedom, that is, Genoa, Savona, Asti, Parma, Piacenza, Alessandria, and Tortona, should be given to a Prince of Savoy*.

This arrangement took place thirteen years before the death of Philip Maria.

As soon as this last of a wicked race had expired, on the 13th of August, 1447, the state was distracted by many and various claimants to his inheritance.

The Milanese, however, deemed the time propitious for the vindication of their ancient liberties, and reconstituted themselves into a Republic.

But they took into their pay Francesco Sforza, the able general who had by turns fought for and against, set up and pulled down, the throne of their last prince, and married Bianca Visconti, his only daughter, a natural child, in 1441. Sforza reduced one by one the mutinous cities of the duchy, which had proclaimed their independence of the capital, and defeated the Venetians, the implacable enemies of Milan, at

* Reumont, Beiträge zur Italienischen Geschichte, ii. 308.

Caravaggio, on the 15th of September, 1448. He had thus restored the State to its integrity, and made it triumphant over all adversaries; when he threw off the mask, and declared that he had conquered for himself, and that he meant to enforce his wife's rights to her father's inheritance.

He was but too eagerly seconded by the Venetians, who made a peace with him (October 18th), and by the towns of the duchy, especially the emulous Pavia, which had already acknowledged his sovereignty.

The Milanese, pressed by domestic and foreign enemies, looked to Savoy for protection.

The name of Savoy had long been popular at Milan. Two of the princesses of that House, Catherine, daughter of Louis II. Baron of Vaud, in 1333, and Blanche, daughter of Aymon Count of Savoy, in 1350, had been married, the one to Azzo, and the other to Galeazzo II., Visconti; and their piety and beneficence hallowed their memory in the hearts of the people. Mary of Savoy, daughter of Amadeus VIII. and widow of Philip Maria, was still living at Milan, a meek, self-denying woman, who had idolized the craven, mis-shapen despot to whom she had been united (she never washed her hands on the days he had chanced to touch them*), and who, devoted to his memory, would not quit the scenes haunted by it. She was looked upon with respect by the Milanese, and now took upon herself to convey their tender of submission to the Duke, Louis, her brother.

* Guichenon, ii. 75.

That was the occasion for Savoy to put forth all her strength.

France had, at this time, not yet achieved the expulsion of the English; Germany was distracted by religious and political feuds. Italy had, as yet, the mastery over her destinies: in Italy itself Milan need be in fear of no adversary, not even of Sforza himself, if her citizens were of one mind.

All that was asked of Savoy was merely a leader, —a rallying standard. But for this it was necessary that Louis of Savoy should ride forward in all his state; that he should bring with him all the splendour and *prestige* of a mighty patron.

He was gouty, however, and unable to mount on horseback*. He understood nothing of Italian politics; and he had, besides, given offence to his warlike nobility, and placed mere court-minions at the head of his forces.

He contented himself with sending a body of 6000 horses, under the command of John of Compey, Sire of Thorens, that favourite of his wife who had never borne arms except in tournaments.

Compey, instead of boldly marching to the relief of the capital, tarried in the territory of Novara, subduing unimportant places, and was beaten and taken prisoner, in the vicinity of Vercelli, by Bartholomew Colleone, one of the generals of Sforza†.

Gaspard de Varax, his lieutenant, continued the

* Sismondi, Histoire des Français, viii. 272.

† Costa de Beauregard, Jun., Sires de Compey, p. 54.

war under great disadvantage, and was almost annihilated in a terrific encounter at Borgomanero in 1449, April 20th. The valour of the Savoy men-at-arms never belied itself for a moment, and the Italian soldiery, used to a milder and more courteous mode of warfare, were dismayed by the fierceness exhibited by these "barbarians." It was the same ferocity, as is well known, which gave French and Swiss combatants such sweeping advantages over the southern men-at-arms in the encounters of the following half-century.

We shall be able to judge of the importance of the movement of Savoy, by the impression it made on the mind of Sforza. He sent messengers to Felix V., who was at this very moment signing his act of abdication of the pontifical dignity, complaining of the unexpected and unprovoked attack of his son. Amadeus, who probably in his heart approved Louis's conduct, and might only have wished him more resolute and energetic, answered, very drily, that he had withdrawn himself from worldly cares, and allowed his son the entire control over his actions*.

Notwithstanding all his success, Sforza had still such good ground to dread the enmity of Savoy, that he offered peace, allowing Louis to retain possession of all the towns which the Savoy troops had taken in the territories of Novara, Alessandria, and Pavia.

These terms were accepted, January 20, 1450, and Sforza, re-assured on this side, now turned all his forces against Milan.

* Guichenon, ii. 85.

The confidence of the Milanese in Louis had been so entire, that for twelve days they had, in sign of allegiance, hung up the arms of Savoy on their city-gates. The defection of the Duke disheartened them. They had come to terms with the Venetians, and concluded the peace of Brescia, September 27, 1449. But Sforza, seconded by the ablest condottieri of Italy, who were eager to see one of their ranks raised to sovereign power, was now too strong for both republics. On the 26th of February, little more than a month after his agreement with Savoy, he had reduced the town to extremities, and the populace declared in his favour. The soldier of fortune prostrated Milan at his feet, and was hailed its sovereign*.

Louis of Savoy was, however, weak and fickle enough to repent his own deed, and, now the opportunity was for ever gone, once more to try the chances of war.

Gian Giacomo of Montferrat—he who had been brought to acknowledge the supremacy of Savoy in 1435—died in 1445, and left three sons, the eldest of whom, John IV., succeeded him.

The second, William, had at an early age developed considerable military talents, and attached himself to the fortunes of Sforza. He had fought valiantly by his side at Caravaggio (1448), and had been rewarded with the sovereignty of Alessandria. But the Duke of Savoy was now advancing to the rescue of Milan, and Sforza, well aware that Montferrat would join Savoy in that movement, became mistrustful of his

* Sismondi, Républiques Italiennes, v. 148.

brave condottiere. William had conceived a most enthusiastic attachment for Bianca Visconti, wife of Sforza, and was, therefore, always lingering about Pavia, notwithstanding the coolness which he knew to exist between his commander-in-chief and his House. Sforza took advantage of the young soldier's weakness, had him apprehended, and kept him a prisoner for above a year (1449).

That year decided the fate of Milan. The new Duke, secure on his throne, at peace with Savoy and Montferrat, set his captive at liberty, but exacted from him, May 9, 1450, a renunciation of the sovereignty of Alessandria, thus taking back his own gift*.

Wounded by this ill-treatment, William of Montferrat persuaded his brother, the Marquis John IV., and Louis of Savoy, to recommence hostilities, and offered to lead their combined forces against Milan.

Venice and Naples had by this time joined in a league against Sforza, and they now made terms with Savoy and Montferrat, by which the former state was to be rewarded with the acquisition of Novara, and the latter to regain Alessandria. William of Montferrat met, however, with a severe check at Cassine, and the war soon slackened on this side.

The contest with Venice and with Alphonso of Naples was, however, more obstinate, and Sforza added to the complication of those Italian disputes by calling for French interference. Charles VII. was too much engrossed by his own difficulties to dream of an in-

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 338.

vasion of Italy. But the appeal of Milan was answered by an adventurous prince, René of Anjou ("good King René"), who had succeeded his brother, Louis III. of Anjou, on the throne of Provence, and, as an heir to the claims of his house upon Naples, was anxious to come into Italy to find himself in opposition with Alphonso of Aragon, now in possession of that southern kingdom.

Savoy and Montferrat, aware of René's intentions, had taken up their position on the Alps, and barred the way against the Provençals. But the Dauphin, Louis, lately connected by marriage with Duke Louis of Savoy, obtained from him a free passage for René, and the latter, as he descended into Lombardy, effected a suspension of hostilities between Milan and the two Subalpine potentates, on the 13th of September, 1453.

The war in the meanwhile proceeded with less ardour in Lombardy itself.

A great event in the East, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, May 29, 1453, had spread terror throughout Christendom, but especially in Italy, where the great enemies of Sforza, Venice and Naples, were exposed to imminent danger by sea.

The arms dropped from the paralysed hands of the combatants. A peace was signed at Lodi, April 9, 1454, between Venice and Milan, to which all the other powers acceded.

Savoy and Montferrat were admitted into that treaty, but upon condition that they should renounce all their conquests in the Milanese territory, especially

those towns in the provinces of Novara, Pavia, and Alessandria, which Louis of Savoy had conquered in 1449, and which had been ceded to him by Sforza, in 1450.

The frontier of Savoy was thus once more fixed at the Sesia. The differences for the succession of Milan were definitively settled, and Savoy had withdrawn from the contest, not only without gain, but with a serious loss of her character, both for military power and political dexterity.

CHAPTER VIII.

DECLINE OF PIEDMONT.

From the Peace of Lodi, in 1454, to the invasion of Charles VIII. in 1494, a period of forty years of comparative peace and prosperity was secured to Italy, interrupted only by the last efforts of the House of Anjou to dispute the possession of Naples with the rival dynasty of Aragon.

The enlightened statesmanship of Francesco Sforza, of Cosmo de' Medici, and Alphonso of Aragon, had laid the basis of a political equipoise in Italy, which removed all chances of a prolonged warfare.

A quarrel arose in Western Italy on the subject of the homage that Montferrat was supposed to owe to Savoy by virtue of the agreement of 1435.

John IV. of Montferrat died in 1464, and was succeeded by his brother, William VIII., that unfortunate admirer of Bianca Visconti, whom all the harshness experienced at the hands of Francesco Sforza, could not wean from his devotion to Milan.

Francesco Sforza died in 1466, and was succeeded by his son, Galeazzo Maria.

With this new Duke, William of Montferrat came to an alliance, on the 25th of February, 1467, the main scope of which was to withdraw the Marquisate from that subjection to Savoy which had been based on fraud and violence three-and-thirty years before.

The infirm Amadeus IX. reigned then at Chambéry, and the war of Italy was entrusted to his brother, Philip of Bresse. It was carried on but feebly for fourteen months, at the end of which Louis XI. of France tendered his mediation, and terminated the war, but without any satisfactory settlement of the main point at issue.

Savoy insisted on her rights of supremacy over Montferrat, whilst the latter bound itself more and more strongly to Milan*.

By this time, however, the House of Montferrat gave symptoms of approaching extinction.

The three sons of Gian Giacomo, John IV., William VIII., and Boniface IV., had no male legitimate issue. John had left only a natural son, Scipio, excluded of course from the succession, and destined to the Church, and to the rich abbeys of Lucedio and Tiglieto, both in the Marquisate. William had only daughters. The eldest of these, Joan, had been married to Louis II., Marquis of Saluzzo, in 1481, with an understanding that, in default of male heirs of either William or Boniface, the male issue of Joan should

* San Giorgio, Cronica, p. 350.

inherit, so that Saluzzo and Montferrat should be united into one state.

William VIII. died in 1483, and Boniface IV., already old and childless, dissatisfied with Louis of Saluzzo, had his nephew Scipio legitimated, with a view to qualify him for the succession.

Louis of Saluzzo, thus baffled in his expectations, sent some of his Spanish hirelings to Casale, by whose hands the unfortunate Scipio was stabbed to death, in open daylight, in the market-place of the town* (March 25, 1485).

Boniface, determined to disappoint Saluzzo, gave the second daughter of William VIII., Blanche, to Charles I. of Savoy, with reversion of the provinces of Montferrat on the left of the Po, to which the Marquis had yet claims; and himself married, though so late in life, Mary, daughter of Stephen, despot of Servia, of whom he had two sons, William IX. and Gian Giorgio. These continued the line for half a century. Boniface IV. died January 31, 1494; and his eldest son, William IX., now only seven years old, was placed under his mother's guardianship.

About this same time Saluzzo had also shaken off its allegiance to Savoy.

We have seen that Louis II. of Saluzzo had departed from that policy to which his father Louis I. had adhered during his long reign, and had waged war against Charles I. of Savoy from 1486 to 1489. Charles I. had indeed severely chastised his vassal; but the matter had

* San Giorgio, p. 360.

been compromised between him and the young King of France, Charles VIII., and was left in abeyance at the death of the young Duke of Savoy in 1490.

Blanche of Montferrat, widow of Charles I. of Savoy, was the sister of Joan, wife of Louis II. of Saluzzo.

The two sisters entertained the bitterest jealousy of each other, and it seems that the war between the two husbands had its origin in the hostile feelings of the wives*.

Joan of Saluzzo proved herself a heroine. When her husband had lost his State, and even his capital, to Charles of Savoy, she found herself shut up in the castle of Revel, almost on the point of becoming a mother. Even in such extremities the Marchioness undertook to defend the castle, and Revel was the only place that did not surrender to the arms of Savoy†.

Now, at the death of Charles I. of Savoy, his widow, Blanche, seeing both France and Milan bent on supporting Saluzzo, resolved upon giving up to Louis II. the towns of the Marquisate (August, 1490). Thus, after a period of about seventy-three years of submission, Saluzzo once more escaped from the dominion of Savoy, and fell all the more helplessly into the power of France.

Precisely at this juncture the destinies of Italy were mature. Louis XI. of France, himself the most cautious and moderate of men, had nevertheless prepared everything for the ambitious career of his son.

He had inherited the rights of Anjou over Naples.

* Denina, Ital. Occid. ii. 186. † Muletti, Saluzzo, v. 309.

He had been on the best terms with Sforza at Milan and with Medici at Florence. His son-in-law, the Duke of Orléans, had re-asserted his claims upon Asti, and the Duke of Milan held Genoa as a French fief. Soon after Louis XI.'s death Saluzzo also came under French subjection, and the young monarch, Charles VIII., had thus secured a road across the Alps for his contemplated Italian invasion. Louis II. of Saluzzo had, in 1480*, cut in the rock a gallery across the Col of Monte Viso, two hundred and fifty feet in length, a most admirable work for that age, which afforded a safe and easy communication between his own state and Dauphiny and Provence.

The young French king was, if we may believe Comines, "as limited in intellect as he was puny and rickety in person."

Had he possessed but a spark of his father's strong sense, the conquest of Italy might have been as easily achieved as it was begun. But it should have commenced with the north. The titles of France to the duchy of Milan were quite as good—or as bad—as those it put forth to the kingdom of Naples. But Charles VIII. suffered himself to be outwitted by the wary ruler of the former state. He launched into a rash distant expedition, from which nothing but his fortune, or the improvidence and cowardice of his enemies, allowed him to extricate himself.

The immediate causes which led to the invasion of Charles VIII. are too well known.

* Muletti, Saluzzo, v. 222.—Eandi, Saluzzo, ii. 412.

Galeazzo Sforza, heir of Francesco, had died by assassination in 1476. He was succeeded by his son Gian Galeazzo, a minor, under the guardianship of Bonne of Savoy, one of the daughters of Duke Louis. But the brothers of the murdered Duke rose in opposition to the Regent, and one of them, the famous Ludovic or Louis "the Moor," removed her from the government, doomed her nephew to a life of obscurity, almost of captivity, and secured the power in his own hands.

The young Gian Galeazzo however had, in 1489, married Isabel of Aragon, daughter of Alphonso II., who succeeded his father, Ferdinand, on the throne of Naples in 1494. The House of Naples took up the cause of the oppressed young Duke, and the jealous uncle, who had otherwise but little to apprehend from their displeasure, deemed it expedient to screen himself from all danger by pointing out to Charles VIII. the facility of the conquest of the southern kingdom, and invited him to make good his titles to it.

Charles came with an army to Lyons in 1494.

Blanche of Montferrat, widow of Charles I., governed Savoy in the name of her infant son, Charles II. Mary of Servia ruled in Montferrat, where another minor, William IX., had just inherited the throne. Western Italy had thus fallen "en quenouille," and the wicked Marquis, Louis II. of Saluzzo, had been long since devoted to France.

The Alps were thus too fatally open to the invader. In 1453, while Savoy still reckoned on the allegiance

of Saluzzo, we have seen that René of Anjou could not force his way across the mountains, except with the consent of Louis of Savoy.

Blanche of Montferrat, unable to arrest the march of the French monarch, only sought the best means of propitiating him.

Charles came to Vienne in August, 1494; he left that town on the 24th, crossed Mont Genèvre, and was met by the Regent of Savoy at Susa, and by her accompanied to Turin on the 5th of September.

Blanche carried her complacency so far as to supply the King with money, and even gave him her jewels, which were pawned with the merchants at Genoa. Charles exacted a similar sacrifice from the Regent of Montferrat, whose personal ornaments went in the same manner to defray the expenses of the war. With these gifts, and that of a splendid war-horse named Savoie, the noblest steed of that age, the King, after a sojourn of one day at Turin, travelled to his own good city of Asti, of which Louis, Duke of Orléans, as its feudal lord, was already in possession.

Greeted in Asti by Louis the Moor, who had brought with him a bevy of the handsomest and most dissolute Milanese ladies, the King plunged into gross debaucheries, and fell ill of that loathsome disease, which Columbus's discoveries had only in the previous year made known to Europe*. He thus wasted in Asti nearly a month, left it for Pavia on the 6th of October, and hence proceeded to Naples, which the base-

* Sismondi, Histoire des Français, ix. 154.

ness of its Aragonese sovereigns and the disaffection of their subjects placed in his power almost without one stroke of his sword.

Meanwhile, shortly after his interview with the King at Pavia, Gian Galeazzo Sforza had died, October 20th, probably by poison administered by his uncle.

This latter was acknowledged Duke of Milan, and viewed now with a very different eye the French occupation of Naples.

Repentant, alarmed for himself, he hastened to join a coalition, signed at Venice, March 31st, 1495, by the Italian Powers, the Emperor Maximilian, and the King of Spain, all bent upon ridding Italy of its Gallic invaders. Charles VIII. relinquished his new conquest, marched through Rome and Tuscany, crossed with difficulty the Apennines at Pontremoli (the same mountain-pass of Lunigiana which had so nearly proved fatal to Frederic Barbarossa in 1167), and met at Fornovo, on the Taro, the army of the Italian confederates, under the Marquis of Mantua, thrice as strong as his own.

Charles cut his way through the enemy, July 6th, 1495; he was on that famous day mounted on his good steed Savoie, the gift of the Regent Blanche, and the high courage and consummate training of that noble animal had no little share in bearing its rider safely out of the *mêlée*. Eight days later the King took refuge in Asti, and there, heedless of his honour, regardless of the danger of the Duke of Orléans, besieged by the Milanese at Novara, he again gave him-

self up to his silly gallantries and unhallowed pleasures. It was in vain that an army of 20,000 Swiss was brought forward to his relief. The sickly King was weary of the wars. A year's campaign had satisfied his ambition; that ambition which only a twelvemonth before could hardly be circumscribed within the limits of the Italian peninsula, and aimed at the subjugation of the East, and the deliverance of the Holy Land. He made peace with Milan, at Vercelli, October 10th; he was on his way back to Turin, October 27th, and, through Susa, Embrun, and Grenoble, reached Lyons on the 7th November.

In less than a year his lieutenants were ignominiously driven from Naples, and not one Frenchman was left in the country.

Thus did the first storm sweep over Italy! Harmless enough in itself, it might have had no serious consequences. But it had laid bare the weakness of the country, its incurable divisions. Each of the great rival nations, France, Spain, Germany, England, nay Turkey itself, was one. Italy alone had been unable to form a State, even a confederacy of States. Italian policy had hitherto hardly ever looked beyond the Alps: it had been limited to a balance between its own conflicting republics and principalities. Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples, had been eternally pitted one against another. The great political contrivance consisted in bringing three of them to bear against two; when the succumbing party endeavoured to retrieve its fortunes by detaching one of the prevailing

powers from the cause of its allies, thus by turns bringing the preponderance on its own side.

In these diplomatic, rather than warlike, conflicts, Savoy had played but a secondary part. Such influence as Amadeus VIII. had established in the southern country was lost under his incapable successors.

But now Louis the Moor had extended the operations of that mean but crafty Italian policy.

Austria, Spain, and France were admitted into the balance. The Italians had no notion of the disproportion between their new allies and themselves. The growth of those Transalpine nations had been unperceived and sudden. Hardly forty years had elapsed since the Emperor Frederic III. had offered Francesco Sforza the investiture of the Duchy of Milan, which that soldier of fortune had won with his good sword, and the offer had been rejected with scorn. As an opponent to Sforza, René of Anjou, at the head of a French force, had about that time played but a poor part. Even at a later period the Italian potentates had been able to spare the French princes of the "League of the Public Weal" and Charles of Burgundy their own mercenary bands, on whom those princes chiefly relied for success. Every one of those five Italian States was a match for any of the foreign monarchies, so long as these were only the aggregate of conflicting feudal elements. But feudalism had come to an end during those very wars of the Public Weal and of Burgundy. Every country but Italy was organized: at least in Italy organization was but partial and local.

A combination between the five Italian States might yet have averted the common fate. But the Italian rulers persevered in their blind system. They would join French or Austrian, Swiss, Spaniard, or Turk, only not each other. We hear of Cambray Leagues, Holy Leagues, all but National Leagues.

Charles VIII. died in 1498, and was followed on the throne by the Duke of Orléans, Louis XII.

He had no sooner attained the royal power than he put forth his claims to Milan, as heir of Valentine Visconti, his grandmother; and on the 15th of April, 1499, he made at Blois a treaty with the Venetians to share the Duchy with them.

Philibert II. reigned now in Savoy. He had just entered his nineteenth year. He was tempted by the French King, by a large bribe, to allow him freely to pass, received him at Turin, and accompanied him to Milan. The French army assembled at Asti, and had only to show itself, to overcome all resistance. Louis XII. entered Milan as a conqueror on the 2nd of October, 1499.

That Duchy, however, was lost as easily as it had been won.

Louis the Moor had taken refuge with the Emperor Maximilian at Innspruck. He put himself at the head of a Swiss force and a large number of Milanese fugitives, and, aided by that hatred which the French never fail to arouse everywhere after three days' occupation, took from them Como, Milan, and other cities, and besieged the relics of their army at Novara.

Louis XII. sent a new French army with 13,000 Swiss into Italy, under La Tremouille. This came too late for the release of Novara, which had already surrendered on the 22nd of March, 1500. But the Moor, unable to meet the French General on the open field, in his turn shut himself up in that city. Here the Swiss in the French army found themselves arrayed against the Swiss in the pay of Milan. They came to an understanding between themselves. Novara was given up to the French, and the ill-fated Sforza, who was endeavouring to escape in disguise, was treacherously pointed out by his mercenaries. He was conveyed to France a prisoner, and there ended his days at Loches, after ten years' captivity.

Master now of Milan, Louis XII. turned his attention to Naples.

The last princes of the Aragonese dynasty hoped for the help of Ferdinand, the Catholic King, who had united the crowns of Aragon and Castile. But on the 11th of November, 1500, this King signed with Louis XII. the Treaty of Granada, by which he agreed to share with that monarch the kingdom of Naples, to the prejudice of its lawful princes, his own relatives.

The bargain was carried into effect.

The French attacked the kingdom as foes,—the Spaniards entered it as friends.

Frederic, the last of his dynasty, placed between such allies and such adversaries, surrendered to the latter at Ischia, August 25, 1501, and died also in France, a captive in everything but in name, in 1504.

Presently his French and Spanish spoilers fell out about the division of the booty. They waged war for two years. The French were worsted at Seminara and Corignola, and a new army came out to retrieve their fortunes. This met with a still greater reverse on the Garigliano, November 5th, 1503, after which Southern Italy acknowledged the rule of the Spaniards.

Meanwhile a new spirit presided over the councils of Savoy.

After his reconciliation with Louis XI., Philip of Bresse, both as a prince of the blood and as a reigning duke, had been wedded to French interests, and his policy had not been without influence on his son and successor Philibert II. This latter had, as we have seen, aided and abetted the conquest of Milan by Louis XII. in 1499.

Philibert however had sense enough to understand his real interests.

He had, on September 26th, 1501, married Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy. This princess had been destined for the Dauphin, son of Louis XI., afterwards Charles VIII., and had even been sent to the French court, by way of initiation into French manners. But Charles VIII. had been tempted by the advantages of a union with the heiress of Brittany, and the Austrian princess had, with little ceremony, been sent back to her father.

Margaret had never forgiven the slight, even after the death of the offender; and now she brought to Savoy her resentment against France as the best part of her dowry.

Philibert had, besides, other subjects of dispute with the court of Louis XII. One of the many sons of his father, René, a natural child, surnamed "Le Grand Bâtard de Savoie," had been legitimated by Philibert himself, in 1497. Like his father and most of his family, René was enthusiastic in his devotion to France, and made himself therefore obnoxious to Margaret of Austria, who drove him from court, obtained a decree of confiscation against him, took for herself the Marquisate of Villars, with which René had been invested, and even induced her father, the Emperor, to annul the deed by which Philibert II. had removed the stain of bastardy from his brother.

All these circumstances widened the breach between France and Savoy, and when, in 1502, Louis XII., urged by the distress of his army at Naples, wished to march from Lyons across Mont Cenis to Asti, Philibert compelled him to follow a circuitous way across Dauphiny and Saluzzo, through that very gallery of Monte Viso which Louis II. of Saluzzo had too fatally thrown open to the invader*.

With Saluzzo bound to her destinies, it was now too late to dream of closing the Alps against France.

But Philibert of Savoy showed that it was still in his power to preserve his own territory inviolate. Equally solicited by France and Austria, by the old and the new allies of his House, he was able to assume that neutral attitude which, backed by a strong armament and by his high resolute spirit, was calculated not only to screen his own subjects from harm,

* Sismondi, Hist. des Français, xi. 268.—Muletti, Saluzzo, v. 378.

but indeed to turn the irreparable calamities of the rest of Italy to their account.

That ever-shifting, ever-shuffling policy, undignified perhaps, but necessary, which guided the councils of Savoy for the three ensuing centuries, making that little State continually to vibrate between the two large ones which contended for the mastery of Italy, was first conceived, and wisely acted upon, at this emergency, by that youthful prince*.

But Philibert II. had no time for the further development of his system.

He died, 1504, September 11th; his Austrian widow carried her salutary rancour against France back to the court of her father, and the new Duke, Charles III., had neither brains to understand, nor heart to follow up, anything like a consistent, intelligible plan.

The great general events by which the utter destruction of Italy was rapidly achieved concern us but indirectly.

Louis XII., who had seen the ill-effects of his partition of the kingdom of Naples with the Spaniards, entered nevertheless into a similar contract with the Emperor Maximilian, at Blois, September 22nd, 1504, by which he agreed to share with Austria the territory of the Venetian Republic.

The treaty however was not carried into immediate effect, and Louis XII. did not again march into Italy before 1507, when, on the 29th of April, he severely chastised a popular rebellion at Genoa.

* Costa de Beauregard, Maison Royale de Savoie, i. 293.

In 1508, again, on the 16th of December, Pope Julius II. joined with the two foreign monarchs of France and Austria against Venice in the League of Cambray.

Louis XII. prostrated the armies of the Republic at Agnadello, May 14th, 1509: the Pope then repented of his connection with those whom he called "barbarians," granted the Venetians his absolution, and formed with them and with the Swiss and Spaniards a new coalition, to which he gave the name of "Holy League," October 5th, 1511.

The French fought with success at Ravenna, April 11th, 1512; but the loss of their leader, Gaston de Foix, spread dismay into their army, and in the course of the following June they were utterly driven out of all Italian lands.

Maximilian Sforza, son of Louis the Moor, was now seated on the throne of Milan, under the Pope's blessing and the protection of the Swiss.

The French made a new descent in 1513, and, strengthened by an alliance with Venice, they attempted under La Tremouille and Trivulzio to re-conquer the Milanese. But they were beaten by the Swiss at Riotta, near Novara, June 6th, and for above two years the Swiss held an almost undisputed sway in Northern Italy.

Julius II. had already died, February 21st, 1513; but his successor, Leo X., though less implacable, still persevered in his hostility to the French.

Louis XII. also expired, January 1st, 1515, and his

young heir, Francis I., immediately turned his thoughts to the conquest of Italy.

The Swiss and their allies, under Prosper Colonna, had now the keeping of the Alps from Mont Blanc to Monte Viso. But Trivulzio opened for the French a new path across the Col d'Argentiera, August 10th, 1515, and on the 15th, by a bold surprise, they took Colonna a prisoner at Villafranca, near Cavour. The King now came down into the plain, and on the 13th and 14th of September he won Milan from the Swiss by the formidable fight of Marignano. Maximilian Sforza made a cession of the Duchy to the French monarch, and ended his inglorious life at Paris, in 1530. Francis I. now came to terms with his enemies, and the treaties of Noyon, August 13th and December 14th, 1516, put an end to the seven years' war to which the League of Cambray had given rise.

Meanwhile Charles of Austria had succeeded Ferdinand the Catholic in Spain, January 5th, 1516, and on the death of Maximilian, January 19th, 1519, he entered into competition with Francis I. of France for the Imperial diadem. After some hesitation, Pope Leo X. decided in favour of the Austrian, and his troops, together with the Spaniards, under Prosper Colonna and the Marquis of Pescara, again drove the French from Milan, November 19th, 1521. Francis Sforza, another son of Louis the Moor, was put in possession of the Duchy.

The French however, although dispersed, were not annihilated.

Since their hot-day at Marignano, the Swiss had concluded a "perpetual peace" with Francis I. at Friburg, November 29th, 1515. Large bands of that brave nation joined the standards of the French General Lautrec, who then ventured on a fatal attack, at La Bicocca, three miles from Milan; but he was here prostrated by Prosper Colonna on the 29th of April, 1522.

Leo X. had been dead since November 24th, 1521, and was succeeded by Adrian VI., a Flemish-born subject of Austria, who soon attached himself to the interests of Charles V.

Italy was now rid of the French,—a prey to the Spaniard and German.

But Francis I. had not given up the contest. A new army came down from the Alps under Admiral Bonnivet, whilst, on the other side, a French prince of the blood, traitor to his country, the Constable of Bourbon, at the head of a strong German band, reinforced the Spaniards at Milan.

Bonnivet was worsted in several encounters, and compelled to retreat.

It was in this backward movement that the Chevalier Bayard was killed at the rearguard, near Romagnano, on the Sesia, on the 20th of April, 1524.

This pattern-knight, the "blameless and fearless," was a native of the castle which still bears his name, on the Isère, opposite to Fort Barraux, close on the borders of Dauphiny with Savoy. He was brought up as a page at the court of the Warrior Duke,

Charles I. of Savoy, and continued in the service of his widow, Blanche of Montferrat, in whose honour he had won his spurs in a tournament at Carignano, in 1499*. It was there that the young Chevalier imbibed the exalted ideas of honour and loyalty which distinguished him, and here that he first attracted the attention of the French monarch, who afterwards attached him to his suite.

Bourbon and Pescara, after driving Bonnivet across the Alps, followed up their advantage, crossed the Var, and laid siege to Marseilles. Defended especially by Italian emigrants by land, and by the Genoese Admiral Andrea Doria by sea, that town repulsed its assailants, and, emboldened by its success, Francis I. now resolved upon a last and mightiest effort upon Italy.

He crossed the Alps with an army, and led it to the recovery of Milan: that city opened its gates to him. He then undertook the siege of Pavia (October 28th, 1524): he was attacked by Pescara under its walls, February 25th, 1525, and fell into his hands a prisoner.

The Italians were now overwhelmed by the power of the victorious Charles V.

Pope Adrian VI. had died on the 14th of September, 1523, and had been followed on the throne by Clement VII. Notwithstanding the weakness and vacillation of his character, this prince harboured ill-will against the Austrian, and under his auspices a vast conspiracy was formed to free Italy from the Im-

* Costa de Beauregard, Maison de Savoie, i. 286.

perial yoke. At its head was Francis Sforza, Duke of Milan, and his chancellor, Girolamo Morone. Venice and Rome, Louise of Savoy, Regent of France, and even Henry VIII. of England, were connected with it. But the plot was betrayed by France, and by the Marquis of Pescara, Viceroy of Naples for Charles V., who had been tempted by the offer of the independent sovereignty of that kingdom, but who, after tampering with the conspirators to worm out their secrets, betrayed them to his imperial master, and arrested Morone, at the castle of Novara, October 14th, 1525.

Meanwhile the French King, conveyed into captivity in Spain, obtained his liberty by the ignominious treaty of Madrid, January 14th, 1526, in which he abandoned all claims upon Italy.

He disavowed that treaty immediately upon his liberation, and joined the Venetians, Sforza, and Pope Clement VII., in a second "Holy League" against Charles V. But he only exposed his allies to the vengeance of his rival. Sforza fell, with Milan, into the hands of the Spaniards, July 24th, 1526, and Rome was exposed to the horrors of nine months' pillage, May 5th, 1527, to February 17th, 1528.

Presently, but too late, a new French army entered Italy under Lautrec. It marched against Pavia, which it delivered over to execution, October 1st, 1527,—a wanton revenge for the defeat suffered by the King under its walls. Then, relinquishing the subjugation of Lombardy, it proceeded to the south, where, by its

mere approach, it effected the deliverance of the Pope and of Rome.

It next attempted the conquest of Naples; but it was miserably ravaged by the plague, and mowed down by the Spaniards. On the 30th of August, 1528, the Marquis of Saluzzo, who commanded its remnants after the death of Lautrec, capitulated at Aversa.

Everything turned in favour of Charles V.

The Dorias, who had been the main support of the French King by sea, were now requited with ingratitude. They roused their oppressed city, Genoa, against its French rulers, September 12th, 1528, and passed over to the Emperor with their fleet. The treaty of Barcelona, June the 20th, 1529, reconciled the Pope with Charles V. Abandoned on all sides, Francis I. now bowed to adversity, and by the "Ladies' Peace," signed on the 5th of August, 1529, by Louise of Savoy, the King's mother, and by Margaret of Austria, dowager Duchess of Savoy, the French-hater, France made a final renunciation of all her claims upon Italy.

Charles was crowned by the Pope at Bologna as King of Lombardy (February 22nd) and as Emperor (March 24th, 1530). He received the homage of all the Italian princes. On very humiliating conditions he restored the crown of Milan to Francis Sforza, who wore it to his death in 1535, when the duchy again escheated to the Emperor. Florence opened its gates to the Imperial armies on the 12th of August, 1530,

and the last sparks of Italian democracy were soon trodden out by the Medici.

The work was now consummated—Italy had ceased to be. Amongst the Italian princes who came to do obeisance to the Emperor at Bologna was Charles III. Duke of Savoy.

He had come to power in 1504, and had been a witness, to some extent even an actor, in all the appalling events of which we have given little more than the dates.

They were, too truly, of a nature to bewilder the loftiest genius, and wear out the sternest constancy.

But the evil star of Savoy and of Italy would have it so, that the mental and moral qualities of the Prince should be in an inverse ratio to the terrible exigencies of the times.

His subjects called Charles III. the "Good" and the "Unfortunate." But the first epithet was hardly a cloak to his miserable weakness, and there are evidences of cruelty and falseness against him—two faults too frequently allied with timidity and irresolution. There was likewise a mixture of vanity and frivolousness in the man's character, which did away with not a little of the respect and sympathy the other epithet would readily call forth.

His very panegyrists avow that he was "grand en esprit, petit en courage*." Other writers have found out that he was "pale and sickly," and "de nature, sans le vouloir blâmer, un peu bossu de son corps†."

* Guichenon, Maison de Savoie, ii. 228.

† Vulliemin, Le Chroniqueur, pp. 192, 272.

Like his grandfather, Duke Louis, he exhibited the rare phenomenon of a prince of Savoy unfit for warlike exercises at an age in which neither friends nor foes would forgive a man his inability to mount on horseback, and uphold his right by strength of arms.

The State laboured at his accession, we are told apologetically*, under the sorest disadvantage—an exhausted exchequer. The evil had commenced with the papacy of Amadeus VIII., the rapacity of Anne of Cyprus, the civil wars to which we have already adverted. But there was now, besides, the jointure of three dowager duchesses to be paid—that of Blanche of Montferrat, widow of Charles I., of Claude of Brittany, relict of Philip II., and of Margaret of Austria, left by Philibert II.; to each of whom the whole, or part of a province, such as Bresse, Faucigny, etc., with all its revenue, was assigned. Louise of Savoy, daughter of Janus, Count of Geneva, similarly drained part of Chablais and Vaud; and Mary, a daughter of Amadeus IX., had been married to Philip of Baden, Count of Neufchâtel, who now claimed the dowry of his countess. He claimed, it is said, far more than his due; but he was under the patronage of the redoubted Bernese, and the claim was admitted in full. Presently a dishonest ducal secretary, named Du Four, of Annecy, supplied these same Swiss of Bern and Friburg with false documents establishing old credits on their part against Savoy to a large amount. The forgery was palpable;

* Cibrario, Torino, i. 306.

but the Swiss were loud in their threats, and the iniquitous demand was complied with.

Philip II., the famous Count of Bresse, father both of Philibert II. and Charles III., had left fifteen children, who had all to be provided for.

Philip, one of them, was the head of a branch line which flourished till 1659, and bore the titles of Dukes of Genevois and Nemours. René, the "Great Bastard," whose descendants became extinct in 1580, transmitted to them the ranks of Marquises of Villars and Counts of Tenda. Nor were the appanages allowed to these numerous scions the worst evil; but they were restless, unmanageable members of the family: they too often took part with the enemies of the country—chiefly with France—and contributed to its calamities.

All these difficulties pointed to neutrality as a wise and necessary policy.

But Charles III., at a very early period, gave symptoms of too ready and unconditional submissiveness. He trusted his defence to the justice of his cause, to his meekness and inoffensiveness. "Nil deest timentibus Deum," was his device.

A well-armed neutrality might have saved the State; but Charles trusted in Providence, and laid down his sword.

Louis XII., who had been shut out of the territory of Savoy by the spirited demeanour of Philibert II. in 1502, was hardly at the trouble of asking for a free passage from Charles III., in 1507, when he marched to the chastisement of Genoa.

The passes of Mont Cenis or Mont Genèvre, adown the open and level valley of Susa, offered the French far easier and shorter ways than the circuitous one by Dauphiny, across the high gallery of Monte Viso, and along the rugged and winding vale of the Po.

Charles III. met the French King at Oulx; he entertained him at Moncalieri, and followed him to Genoa and Milan.

This was mere officious deference paid to a great monarch, and nowise committed him.

But presently, in the following year, he departed from his neutral policy, and became a member of the League of Cambray, taking part against the old allies of his House, the Venetians, in order to claim, as his own share in the spoils of the Republic, the island kingdom of Cyprus.

We have already said that Louis, son of Duke Louis, had in 1459, married the heiress of that kingdom, Charlotte of Lusignan, and was crowned with her at Nicosia.

James of Lusignan, a natural brother of Charlotte, supported by the Sultan of Egypt, had driven the king and queen from the island and usurped the throne.

Louis and Charlotte died childless (1482–1485), and the latter bequeathed her titles to Cyprus to the reigning Duke of Savoy, Charles I.

James of Lusignan had in 1470 married Catherine Cornaro, a Venetian lady, who in 1473 was adopted as "Daughter of the Republic." Catherine inherited from her husband, and Venice from her adopted child; so that in 1488 the island-realm came into the posses-

sion of the only western state which could still defend it against the overwhelming tide of Ottoman invasion.

Charles I. of Savoy was both too wise and too busy to prefer his claims against such formidable competitors.

He merely assumed the title, and quartered the arms of Cyprus with those of Savoy; and wrote at the same time a letter to the Sultan, deprecatory of the countenance he gave to illegitimate usurpers*.

There the matter should have ended.

But Charles III. deemed the League of Cambray a good opportunity to come by his own, and he hailed the battle of Agnadello as a personal triumph. Nor was he satisfied with mere demonstrations of this nature; but when the Swiss attempted to cross the Alps to the aid of the Venetians, Charles had the hardihood to close the Val d'Aosta against them.

It was at this juncture that the forged bonds to which we have alluded above were produced. Charles demurred at first. He went as far as Geneva, and made semblance of readiness to engage in actual warfare with the Swiss. But he thought better on the matter, came to terms at Baden, and by paying his pretended debts, in May 1512, he made his peace with the Swiss.

In Italy, in the meanwhile, the League of Cambray had resolved itself into the Holy League. Charles III. was now induced by the Swiss to join the latter combination, took part with the Pope and the Venetians, and found himself at war with the French.

It would have been well for him and for Italy, had he persevered in this alliance.

* Guichenon, ii. 135.

The scheme of that wrathful and blundering, but well-meaning pope, Julius II., with the "heart of oak" (Della Rovere), was the only one, under all circumstances, which could yet turn the course of destiny. He aspired to the glory of driving the "barbarians" out of Italy—all the barbarians. By mere national strength that object was no longer attainable: he must needs use foreigner against foreigner He had secured the Swiss, the strongest and yet the most manageable allies; and by their means he could not only have rid the north of Italy of the French, but eventually also meant to drive the Spaniards from the south*. As to the Swiss, mere hirelings, they could be paid off with gold and blessings when their task was done.

For this purpose, however, it was necessary, in the first place, that Julius II. should have a long life; then that all the Italian potentates should fall in with the Pope's views,—that they should put forth all their strength to second him. More than any Italian state Savoy was here interested; for the French, masters of Milan, had now encompassed her on all sides, and the smaller state existed only at the good pleasure and by the forbearance of the larger one.

Savoy was consequently a member of the Holy League till 1513, and had the satisfaction of seeing the French driven from Milan.

But when Francis I. ascended the throne of France,

* Sismondi, Républiques Italiennes, vii. 440.

and once more turned his thoughts upon Italy; the ascendancy of Louise of Savoy, and of René, two members of the family, always false to the cause of their House and of Italy, had power to detach the ever-vacillating Charles from the League; and make him shrink back into his absurd, because most untimely neutrality.

Charles III. did not take arms with the French. Yet it is remarkable that a man of his character should have unwittingly and indirectly been instrumental in the passage of the Alps by the army of Francis I., and in the decisive victory of that king at Marignano.

The Italian allies, who could not prevail upon Charles III. to take upon himself the defence of his own frontier of the Alps, laughed his neutrality to scorn, marched into Piedmont, and occupied those mountain-defiles for themselves.

The Swiss established their head-quarters at Susa: Prosper Colonna sat down at Carmagnola, and thus they guarded the passes both of Piedmont and Saluzzo.

Marshal Trivulzio, at the head of the French, made his way across the Col d'Argentiera, and came down the valley of the Stura as far as Rocca Sparviera. He could however have gone no further, because the Swiss, posted at Cuneo, effectually blocked up the entrance of that valley. But the Duke of Savoy, indignant at the violation of his territory on the part of the allies, had sent a Piedmontese nobleman, by name Charles Solaro, Lord of Moretta, to compliment the French King on his approach.

It is most probable that the pass itself of Argentiera was pointed out to Trivulzio by this messenger, or by an old chamois-hunter in his service*. But he, at any rate, it was who now offered to guide a chosen band across the hardly less insurmountable ridge which separates Val di Stura from Val di Grana, so that they might suddenly fall upon the rear of Colonna, at Carmagnola. La Palisse, Bayard, and the flower of French chivalry had volunteered for this hazardous expedition. Colonna had retired from Carmagnola, and, on his way to Pinerolo, where he wished to join a Swiss force, had reached as far as Villafranca. This town is only one mile from Moretta, the seat of that very nobleman who now guided the French adventurers,—who was therefore well acquainted with the localities. Colonna had sat down to his dinner, when his enemies stood before him, fallen, for aught he knew, from the clouds†.

The capture of the commander spread confusion into the armies of the allies. Piedmont and the Alps were lost; Cuneo was abandoned; Francis was enabled, on the track of his vanguard, to gain the open plain.

The war was now removed into the Milanese.

The Swiss were dissatisfied with Maximilian Sforza and his allies, on account of some arrears of pay. Savoy, always neutral, always anxious for peace, well

* Denina, Italia Occidentale, ii. 259.

† Guichenon, ii. 197.—Sismondi, Répub. Italiennes, vii. 486.—Muletti, Saluzzo, vi. 35.

aware of the disposition of those mountaineers, determined either on winning them over to the French, or at least drawing them into her own neutral system.

Negotiations were opened at Gallarate, and were conducted by Duke Charles himself, and by the Bâtard René, a man, like many princes of these minor branches of Savoy, of great political ability, no less than of the most brilliant valour, who fought by the King's side throughout this and all the following campaigns.

The Bernese and part of their confederates, 10,000 combatants, were persuaded or bribed into an agreement with the French, and actually marched to their homes. But there was, with the rest, a man of firm and daring mind, a warrior-priest, by name Matthew Schiner, a Valaisan, low-born, but who had found favour with Pope Julius II., and had been raised by him to the rank of Cardinal and Bishop of Sion. There was congeniality of temper in these two hot-headed churchmen, and the Pontiff had infused into the prelate all his implacable enmity against the French.

Schiner remained, and induced one-half of the Swiss army—the troops of the Forest Cantons—to remain. On the morrow a new corps, chiefly from Zurich, came down from Bellinzona to Monza, and these, as they had been no party to the treaty of Gallarate, seconded the Cardinal with right goodwill.

It was thus, thanks to Savoy, only with one-half of the Swiss force that Francis I. had to deal at the giant conflict of Marignano, and even these were almost too many for him. Had the 10,000 Bernese

been on the field, that battle would hardly be numbered among the triumphs of the "grande nation*."

Even after the battle Charles III. never slackened from his pacific exertions.

On the 7th of November, 1515, he effected a treaty between the French King and eight cantons, at Geneva. This, again, led to a "perpetual alliance" between France and the whole confederacy, signed at Friburg, November 29th, 1516. In all these transactions the Grand Bâtard acted as plenipotentiary of France, and the Duke, or in his name President La Croix Lambert, of the Chambre des Comptes of Savoy, performed the functions of high mediator and arbiter†.

Thus was the great scheme of Pope Julius II. utterly defeated. The instrument with which he hoped to work out Italy's deliverance was broken. The Swiss, as a nation, never reappeared on the field; the improvident Duke of Savoy had secured to France her most useful allies, and it was not long ere Francis I. requited this service by turning those very Swiss against Savoy.

Historical impartiality has done away with not a little of the *prestige* which the showy qualities of personal bravery and refinement had attached to the memory of Francis of France.

His selfish and unprincipled character never showed

* Sismondi, Républiques Italiennes, vii. 492.—Boccard, Hist. du Vallais, p. 151.

† Guichenon, ii. 198.

itself so distinctly as in his conduct toward his uncle of Savoy. Master of Milan after Marignano, the King perceived now—what ought indeed to have been obvious to his predecessors—that the conquest of Italy should have begun, not with Naples or Lombardy, but with Savoy and Piedmont. Indeed this very plain policy needed hardly to be pointed out to him, as it is said that it was subsequently*, by that meanest Italian that ever sat on St. Peter's chair, Clement VII. Even under Clement's predecessors the King understood that policy very well. He sought everywhere for pretexts for a quarrel with Savoy, and he was actually urged on by those false relatives of the Duke, Louise of Savoy and the Bâtard René.

A frivolous dispute arose respecting some new bishoprics, which Leo X., to please the Duke, whose sister Philiberta had married Julian de' Medici, the Pope's brother, had erected at Chambéry and Bourg-en-Bresse, in 1515. High words arose on the subject, and the King, waxing warm in his affected passion, sent, in 1518, his king-at-arms, Normandy, to claim for himself Nice and Vercelli, as parts, respectively, of the county of Nice and duchy of Milan; for Louise of Savoy, her share of the inheritance of Philip II. her father, and of Margaret of Bourbon her mother; finally, for René, the cõunty or marquisate of Villars, which had been confiscated for the benefit of Margaret of Austria, in the reign of Philibert II.

But the hour of Savoy had not yet come.

* Sismondi, Hist. des Français, xi. 176.

The Swiss were still alive to the importance of that state, as their own safeguard against French ambition. They remonstrated with the King in behalf of their ancient ally and patron, and announced their resolution to take the field for Savoy if matters were pushed to extremities.

Francis I. instantly lowered his tone, and the storm blew over for the present.

The Duke now applauded himself on his own shuffling policy, and improved upon it.

During the last wars between Francis I. and Charles V., ending with the battle of Pavia and the treaties of Madrid and Cambray, Charles III. was indefatigable in his tender of good offices, and evinced a trembling anxiety to please and oblige all parties.

But who ever escaped giving offence by an excessive zeal for universal conciliation?

Bound by so many ties to the House of France, the Duke of Savoy deemed it expedient, in 1521, to ally himself with the Emperor, by marrying Beatrix of Portugal, sister of the Empress, a rare beauty, for whom Charles V. entertained even a warmer admiration than his relationship authorized. In 1527, he feared he had gone too far with Austria, and betrothed his infant son Louis, Prince of Piedmont, to Margaret, daughter of Francis I. Three years later, he spoiled all the good effect of the projected union, by sending that same prince to Madrid, there to be educated with the Austrian heir.

All these matrimonial schemes might have been

overlooked; but in 1523 he had welcomed to Turin, and supplied with money and jewels, the Constable of Bourbon, who had just quitted the French court, at war with Louise of Savoy, and who was now entertained by Charles V. with vague promises of a kingdom of Provence. There seems even some evidence of overtures being made to Charles of Savoy by the Emperor, at this juncture, to obtain from him a cession of the Savoy provinces beyond the Alps, to be incorporated with the projected kingdom of Provence, in exchange for some equivalent Italian territories*.

The battle of Pavia defeated all these projects.

After that battle the astute diplomatist of Savoy despatched a messenger to congratulate the Emperor on his victory, and another to condole with the King on his captivity. He offered to go himself to Madrid to negotiate for the King's deliverance, an offer which Louise of Savoy, who had perhaps no great opinion either of his ability or of his sincerity, thought proper to decline.

At last the peace of Cambray put an end to all this undignified shilly-shallying.

France was now not only driven off the field, but had utterly and basely forsaken her Italian allies, and forced them to make the best bargain they could with the victorious Emperor. Duke Charles found it necessary to do obeisance at Bologna, and took his rank amongst the Italian potentates assembled there for Charles V.'s coronation.

* Sismondi, Histoire des Français, x. 177.

The Emperor now gave him, for the sake of his beautiful duchess, April 13th, 1531, Asti and its territory. The Duke was afterwards at infinite and vain pains to persuade Francis I. that he had no reason to feel aggrieved at his acceptance of that county, as the King himself had formally renounced it, both at Lyons in 1523, and at Cambray in 1529.

But Francis had recovered from his disaster of Pavia, and was anxious to reappear as a conqueror in Italy. His exchequer was replenished by the savings of Louise of Savoy, his mother, who had died in 1531, and had left him an immense fortune, accumulated during the greatest distress of the country. Charles V. was away on his expedition against Tunis (June to August, 1535), and even on his return the Turks and the German Protestants allowed him no rest. The Emperor was therefore most anxious to avoid a collision with France, and was actually negotiating with the King for a cession of the Duchy of Milan, now vacant by the death of Francis Sforza, in favour of one of the princes of France.

This moment of the Emperor's perplexity and indecision was seized by Francis as favourable to his designs on Savoy.

He brought forward once more the absurd pretensions of 1518.

He put forth either his own claims or those of Louise of Savoy; he went as far back as Charles of Anjou and Valentine Visconti; and, upon some plea or other, he demanded the whole of Savoy and Piedmont, not excepting Turin itself.

De Poyet, President of the Parliament of Paris, was sent to Turin, charged with these demands, and was referred to the Council of Piedmont. He argued the point with the President of the Council, John Francis de Porporato, who refuted his reasons with great clearness and firmness; whereupon the Frenchman waxed wroth, as men will often do who feel the insufficiency of their arguments, and he took therefore a loftier tone, and concluded "No more words! Such is the King's pleasure and good will." Porporato had still dignity enough to reply "that he was aware of no such law in his statute-books*."

Even after such extremities the King sent new propositions to the Duke, offering to indemnify him for the loss of his states by ample domains in France; and he availed himself for this message of the same Solaro of Moretta, who had done the French so essential a service in 1515. But the Duke rejected such offers with high indignation, and dismissed the messenger with a severe reproof for his disloyalty†.

By this time King Francis had already come to Lyons, and, on the 11th of February, 1536, he gave orders for an attack on Savoy.

In the meanwhile another storm was just bursting on Savoy from a different quarter.

* Guichenon, ii. 211. † Cibrario, Torino, i. 310.

CHAPTER IX.

DOWNFALL OF PIEDMONT.

We left, in 1476, the Bernese in possession of some towns in Vaud, and the Valaisans advanced on the lower lands of the Rhone Valley, down almost to the borders of the Leman.

The democratic spirit which animated these proud mountaineers was not without great influence upon the towns of Vaud, and more especially on Lausanne and Geneva.

Both these cities were still under nominal obedience to their Prince-bishops, and acknowledged the supremacy of Savoy; but they were in reality governed by their own magistrates, according to the broadest republican principles. They were however, on the whole, strongly attached to the House of Savoy, which had so long stood between them and the insolence of their nobles, and were, on any emergency, lavish of their money and of their blood in its cause.

The Dukes had been especially anxious about their hold on Geneva, their natural metropolis north of the

Alps. Since the pontificate of Amadeus VIII., Geneva had had no bishops but members of the reigning family, or churchmen even still more devoted to the patrons who appointed them. These prelates held a brilliant court in the town, and the Dukes themselves, various princes of the blood, and many nobles, had houses there, and the city was often chosen as the rendezvous of the States-General of the whole country of Savoy.

All this, while it contributed to the lustre and prosperity of Geneva, gradually taught its citizens to look upon themselves as subjects, and the sovereign was almost as completely at home in the city of the Lake, as he might be at Chambéry or at Turin.

All this, however, did not suffice.

In 1513, John of Savoy, a natural son of Francis, one of the sons of Duke Louis, who had been Bishop of Geneva, was appointed to the same see. He was the fifth prince of the House who had held that dignity within sixty years.

This bishop, a contemptible weakling, who died in 1522 a victim to his foul debauchery, was entirely a slave to the wishes of the Duke. Charles III. obtained from him what Amadeus VIII. had sued for in vain. The Bishop abdicated in his favour his temporal rights, thus establishing, by name, a sovereignty that already existed in fact.

But there is something in a name.

A strong party, hostile to the dominion of Savoy, had long been in existence. These, to show their

tendency towards a union with the Swiss confederates, and to enlist the sympathies of these latter in their cause, assumed the name of "Eidgenossen," a term which, corrupted into "Eidguenots" and "Huguenots," was afterwards applied to the Reformers of France*. The partisans of the Bishop or Duke were by derision designated as "Mamelukes."

The Swiss were not slow in taking part with the Liberals. The town of Friburg, especially, lent them most powerful aid by extending to them the same rights with its own citizens, or conferring on Geneva what was called the right of "Combourgeosie,"—fellow-burghership.

Duke Charles thought the time had come for a display of vigour. He came to Geneva with an army; entered the town by a breach in the walls, May 28, 1519, and struck off on the scaffold the head of one Berthelier, a brothel-keeper, as we are informed†, but one of those ranting enthusiasts whom a multitude loves to place at its head.

The men of Friburg, faithful to their engagements, were marching to the rescue of their fellow-burghers; but the other confederates, who only in the previous year had taken Savoy under their protection against France, were not yet ready for a breach with the Duke, and they advised and compelled the Friburgers to give up their compact of alliance, and abandon the sister-city to her fate.

The strong measures of Charles "the Good," whom

* Spon, Hist. de Genève, 140. † Vulliemin, Le Chroniqueur, p. 15.

the Swiss describe as a Nero to their country, produced such effects as may be expected from severity unsupported by a corresponding strength.

The patriots became numerous, and were led by better men than their fallen Berthelier.

These were Besançon Hughes, and Bonnivard: the latter a native of Seyssel in Savoy, who was educated at the University of Turin. The Swiss, eager to obtain a footing in a town which was the centre of their commerce, gave the malcontents all the underhand encouragement in their power, till at last, on the 24th of February, 1526, Besançon Hughes, in the name of Geneva, signed a new treaty of fellow-burghership with Bern and Friburg.

By this time John of Savoy had died, 1522, and Charles III. had nominated Peter de la Baume to the bishopric. This prelate rendered himself intolerable by his haughtiness, and was tumultuously expelled, with his partisans.

But the Episcopal and Savoyard party, though worsted in the city, was still strong in the surrounding districts, especially among the impoverished but still proud, high-spirited nobility of Vaud.

A large number of these gentlemen were carousing one evening at the castle of Sacconay Bursinel, at a banquet intended to celebrate their league with the fugitive Mamelukes from Geneva. Their loyalty waxed warm over their cups: one of them raised his spoon in the air, and "As true as I hold this in my hand," said he, "we will swallow up Geneva." The words

were caught up with enthusiasm. Every spoon was equally brandished on high, and that homely instrument was taken as an emblem. The "Spoon League" immediately took the field.

There ensued a civil war for several years. But the League, though secretly encouraged, was openly disavowed by the craven Duke, whilst the patriots were always sure of the countenance of the confederates.

Religious dissension soon aggravated the virulence of political factions.

The Reformation had already made great steps in Germany and elsewhere.

Its apostles from France, Farel and Viret, had been heard in the communities of Vaud, but hitherto with little success*. Indeed the population of Roman Helvetia showed for a long time a dislike and dread of religious innovation; and the States of Vaud, in 1525, like those of Aosta, in 1536, after mature deliberation, declared in favour of what they believed to be the faith of their fathers†.

But it was otherwise in Geneva, where dissent from the Church came opportunely to justify resistance to a power grounded on episcopal rights. The exasperation became extreme. The town of Geneva and the fair provinces round the Leman, became the theatre of endless violence and bloodshed.

* Verdeil, Canton de Vaud, i. 386.—Vulliemin, Le Chroniqueur, p. 360.

† Costa de Beauregard, Maison de Savoie, i. 318.—Sclopis, Legislazione del Piemonte, p. 477; Stati Generali, p. 398.—Verdeil, Canton de Vaud, i. 360.

The Swiss, however, had very nearly caused the balance to sink on their own side, and occupied Geneva, when Charles V. put forth his imperial authority, and by the treaty of St. Julien, October 19th, 1530, and by that of Payerne, December 31st of the same year, the sovereignty of the Duke, though shorn of its splendour, was restored in Geneva.

By those very treaties, however, the Duke had sacrificed the Mamelukes and Spoon-knights, his partisans. These soon recommenced the war on their own account, and, masters of the open country, they laid siege to Geneva.

But Geneva and the Swiss had by this time found a new ally.

Francis I., who had been, not from conviction, but from a tyrant's instinctive dread of innovation and inquiry, the very earliest and fiercest heretic-burner in his own kingdom, had nevertheless been stirring up the League of Smalcalde in its opposition to the Emperor, in Germany; and by the same policy, he now abetted in Geneva those very French sectarians who had fled from his persecuting fury.

On the 27th of August, 1535, the city of Geneva abolished the Roman Catholic worship, and proclaimed the independence of its republic. It was, however, encompassed all round by the army of the Spoon League; and Francis I., not yet at war with Savoy, sent a French and an Italian force to the rescue of the beleaguered town. These fell in with the Spoon-knights, and were cut to pieces. Francis made his

baffled attempt the subject of a new grievance against Savoy: he protested that his troops had been attacked while marching peacefully through the territory of an ally*.

He now beckoned the Swiss, who were only biding their time, and whom he now assured that the Duke's hands would be fully employed elsewhere.

Bern came on with all her might, in spite of the violent opposition of the Catholic cantons (January 21, 1536). The loyal nobles—Spoon-knights and Mamelukes—were crushed without a struggle. Geneva was free (February 2), and the invaders established their sway over Vaud, Gex, and part of Chablais. Friburg occupied the County of Romont. The Valaisans came down on their own side, and the Dranse marked the limits of their respective conquests. The Bishop of Lausanne was involved in the ruin of Savoy, and his city, no less than all the possessions of his see, fell to the share of the Bernese. By a new expedition, March 29, they stormed the last stronghold of Savoy, the castle of Chillon, and burst open the dungeon of its famous prisoner, Bonnivard, who had been languishing there for six years, and who now would not rejoice at his own deliverance until he heard that his adopted country, Geneva, was also free†.

By this very able manœuvre Francis I. preluded his own invasion of Savoy.

* Sismondi, Histoire des Français, x. 180.

† "Bonnivard, tu es libre! Et Genève?—L'est aussi." Antiquity can boast no nobler words.—Vulliemin, Le Chroniqueur, p. 260; Chillon, p. 174.

Bresse and Savoy were overrun without resistance. The strong castle of Montmeillan held out only a few days: it capitulated, either owing to want of provisions, or to the cowardice and treachery of Francis Chiaramonte, a Neapolitan, its commander.

Troops sent to arrest the French on the heights of Mont Cenis, arrived too late.

The Duke himself advised the city of Turin to surrender. He quitted it on the 27th of March: the French stood before its gates on the 1st of April. Even yet the townspeople sent messengers to the Duke, asking permission to defend themselves, and again Charles ordered them to yield to necessity. The city now limited itself to a useless protest, and the invaders took possession of it on the following day*. Chieri, Pinerolo, Fossano, Alba, and other places fell into the enemy's hands with equal facility. The Duke had crossed the Dora Baltea, and fallen back upon Chivasso, where Gian Giacomo de' Medici, afterwards Marquis of Marignano, joined him with a small Imperial force. But even the passage of the Dora was forced, and Charles withdrew to Vercelli.

Philip Chabot, the French admiral, had strict orders to engage in no hostilities with the Imperial lieutenants. Vercelli, though belonging to Savoy, was claimed by these as an ancient dependency on the dukedom of Milan, for which the King was at this very moment bargaining with the Emperor. The invaders came thus to a halt under its walls, and even soon re-crossed

* Cibrario, Torino, i. 311.—Saluces, Histoire Militaire du Piémont ii. 17.

the Dora. Chabot was presently on his way back into France with a portion of his army*.

Only one blow had been struck, and yet henceforth Savoy and Piedmont have ceased to exist.

The contest was now to be carried on between the two rivals of France and Austria.

But even the struggle between those two emulous potentates had lost much of its epic interest after the battle of Pavia.

Francis I. no longer appeared on the battle-field: and Charles V. began to feel the Empire of both hemispheres too great a burden on his shoulders, and now committed blunder upon blunder.

The duchy of Milan had come into the Emperor's possession since the death of the last Sforza, in 1535, October 20th. He was however, or affected to be, still inclined to make a cession of that state in favour of one of the French princes, and negotiations on the subject were still pending. But he was now painfully moved by the unexpected and wanton attack of France on the Duke of Savoy, his relative, and, as a Prince of the Empire, his vassal. He broke off the negotiation with Francis; in a consistory before the Pope, at Rome, April 8th, 1536, he launched forth into the bitterest invectives, and hurled defiance against the King. He now hastily called together the army which had conquered Tunis; crossed Tuscany and Lunigiana, and, on the 8th of May he joined, at Savigliano, Anthony de Leyva, who had brought to him the army

* Sismondi, Hist. des Français, x. 186.

of Lombardy. Fossano yielded to their arms on the 24th of June; and Turin, which the French had but hastily fortified, would probably have no longer offered resistance.

But a fatal scheme now struck the wayward fancy of the Emperor.

He gave up Turin, renounced the thought of a rescue of Piedmont; he resolved upon carrying the war into the enemy's territory, and ordered a general march on Provence.

On the 13th of July he crossed the Apennines to the Riviera. On the 25th he entered France at the Var.

The French, unable to defend their southern province, adopted the desperate resolution of laying it waste. Charles V. advanced upon a wilderness. He was baffled at Arles and Marseilles,—Marseilles, where his generals, Bourbon and Pescara, had been equally foiled twelve years before. The Imperial army was mowed down by famine and disease. Leyva, its chief, governor of Milan, and the greatest of Charles's generals, fell before Marseilles. Charles was fain to bring back his thinned battalions across the Var, on the 25th of September, 1536.

In the meanwhile Guido Rangoni of Modena had raised an army of 10,000 men for the French King at Mirandola, occupied Tortona, made an unsuccessful attempt upon Genoa, and throwing himself upon Piedmont, where Gian Giacomo de' Medici still commanded for the Emperor, re-conquered Carignano, Chieri, Car-

magnola, and Cherasco, and forced the Imperial generals to raise the siege of Turin.

Both parties now slackened in their exertions. The war in Piedmont was reduced to the siege of strong places; or rather to petty stratagems and surprises, and sudden assaults upon fortresses.

The French were clearly at a disadvantage in a war of this nature, and the King, upon receiving tidings of the imminent loss of the whole of Piedmont, rested all his hopes on his alliance with the Turks.

Solyman was to effect a landing in the south of Italy, whilst the King himself would reinforce his army in the north with 50,000 men.

The Turks were punctual to their time, and in July, 1537, their vanguard landed at Otranto. But they saw or thought themselves ill-seconded by their ally, and soon re-embarked. The King's army was nevertheless on its way, though too late: on the 21st of October it forced the Pass of Mont Cenis, took Susa, which was still in the hands of the Imperialists, and drove the latter back upon Rivoli. These French forces were led by Prince Henry of France and by the Constable Anne of Montmorency. In November the King himself crossed the mountains; but, on the 16th of that month, an armistice was signed by his diplomatic agents at Monzon, in Aragon, and the progress of the French arms was interrupted.

Pope Paul III., anxious for the pacification of Christendom, for the Turks now caused serious apprehensions to all Europe, invited the two contending potentates to a congress at Nice (May 17th, 1538).

Neither of the two monarchs, nor the Pontiff himself, were allowed to enter the town. The King and Emperor came to no interview: and all that Paul III. could obtain from them, singly, was their consent to a truce of ten years (June 18th).

The question of Savoy and Piedmont was left in abeyance; each of the belligerent powers remained in possession of what they had hitherto occupied. The French had still Turin, and were also strong in Pinerolo, Centallo, and Bene. The Imperialists possessed Asti, Vercelli, Ivrea, Fossano, Cuneo, Chieri, Cherasco.

The truce of ten years did not last more than three years. During this interval, however, Charles V. met the King at Aigues Mortes (July 14th, 1538), and in his eagerness to chastise a rebellion at Ghent, he travelled across France with him, under the appearance of cordial friendship, and the wildest schemes of an alliance between the two monarchs, and against all the rest of the world, were for a long time discussed.

The understanding between them was, however, of short duration, and Francis I., who had now abandoned all hope of regaining Milan by peaceful transactions, since the Emperor had invested his own son Philip with the duchy (October 10th, 1540), was only anxious for a renewal of hostilities. The pretext for a rupture was furnished by the murder of Rincon and Fregoso (July 3rd, 1541), a Spaniard and a Genoese, whom the King had charged with a mission to Constantinople, and who had the ill-fortune to fall into the hands of the Marquis del Vasto, or del Guasto, the

Emperor's commander in Lombardy. Notwithstanding this fresh declaration of war on the part of France, the Emperor persisted in his long-projected expedition against Algiers.

He was aware that the hopes of France lay in her alliance with the Turks, and he determined upon crushing the Barbary pirates, the main strength of the Ottoman empire by sea. His glorious exploits at Tunis had intoxicated him. In thirteen days (October 18 to October 31, 1541) the noblest armament that ever sailed from a Christian harbour was miserably wrecked and dispersed.

But even the fearful disaster of Algiers brought no important advantage to the Emperor's enemy. The war on the frontier of Spain and Belgium led to no results. The allies of Francis I. in Germany were subdued.

In Piedmont, the Imperialists held their ground at Asti, Ivrea, Fossano, Chieri, and elsewhere. The French General Du Bellay won Cherasco from the ducal troops. But Admiral Annebaut, with 7000 men, was repulsed by mere burghers at Cuneo (1542). In the following year, an onset upon Nice, by the combined forces of French and Turks, was defeated by the undaunted devotion of the people and garrison (August 10 to September 8, 1543).

War blazed out with fresh vigour in Piedmont in the spring of the ensuing year.

The war in that province had been brought to the walls of Carignano, which was encompassed with

French arms, and in which the Imperialists sustained a long and memorable siege.

Francis of Bourbon on the French side, and the Marquis del Vasto on the Austrian, came forward with fresh troops. The prospects of the French so far brightened, that they extorted from the reluctant king permission to come to a general action. It was fought on the 15th of April, 1544, at Ceresole, in the province of Alba, and won mainly by the impetuosity of some French courtiers, who had come as volunteers from a mere spirit of adventure, and to win favour in the eyes of the fair ladies they had left behind*. But it was a hard-contested field: it cost the victors themselves torrents of blood, and was utterly barren of results; for the King soon afterwards withdrew the best part of his army. Piero Strozzi, who enlisted Italian troops in the King's service, was routed on the Scrivia, near Serravalle. He however collected another force in Lombardy, possessed himself of Alba, and joined the French troops, who by this time had taken Carignano.

But it was not in Italy that the destinies of Europe were decided.

The Emperor, allied with Henry VIII. of England, invaded Champagne and advanced upon Paris. France was seized with a general alarm, and the King had, on the 18th of September, 1544, to sign the Peace of Crespy.

Even this peace afforded no relief to Piedmont.

* Sismondi, Hist. des Français, x. 321.

The two monarchs agreed upon a restitution of their mutual conquests: some illusory hopes were held out that Milan should be given as a dowry to an Austrian princess, on her marriage with Charles, Duke of Orléans. Still more distant prospects were entertained of the eventual restoration of the Duke of Savoy to his states, with the exception of Montmeillan and Pinerolo, which were to be given to the French; but the two armies continued in their respective positions in the exhausted country. Nor did its condition improve at the death of Francis I. in 1547, nor at the abdication of Charles V. in 1556. The occupation of Piedmont continued under their successors, Henry II. of France, and Philip II. of Spain; and the country was made to feel the horrors of all successive wars.

These broke out again in 1551, and, with the exception of short intervals of truce, were only ended by the peace of Château (or Cateau) Cambresis, on the 3rd of April, 1559.

Their details in Piedmont are simply flat and uninteresting. The main contest was removed to Flanders, where the battles of St. Quintin, August 10, 1557, and of Gravelines, July 13, 1558, finally decided it against the French.

But the want of a decisive character did not render the hostilities of the French and Austrians less burdensome to the country which they had chosen for their battle-field.

Though trodden by the invader ever since 1494, Piedmont was not actually treated as a conquered

land till 1536. Of those sixty-five years of impious warfare, which achieved the destruction of all Italy (1494–1559), the western country endured only the latter end, a period of three-and-twenty years (1536–1559). Yet no part of Italy was more barbarously ill-used: no district was brought to such extremes of mute desolation. In other countries the invading hosts passed, and passed only; but here they abided. Milan, Naples, Tuscany, Rome, after 1530, were in some manner re-organized, whether under a native or a foreign ruler. Piedmont was militarily occupied for a quarter of a century. It was not the whirlwind and storm marking a terrible track of havoc and ruin in its immediate path, but leaving the surrounding region untouched; the devastation was here slow, searching, unsparing. The very tardiness and inefficiency of warlike operations, arose chiefly from the impracticability of rapid movements in a land so utterly destitute of means of subsistence.

Alas for the garden of Piedmont! There was a moment, it is said*, when Charles V., at the suggestion of an unnatural Italian, Ferdinand (or Ferrante) Gonzaga, contemplated the idea of securing Lombardy against French incursions, by converting the whole tract between the Alps and the Po into a marshy wilderness. More than half the task was achieved. Pity for the wretched country seemed to strike the very heart of its destroyers. On the proposition of the French Marshal De Brissac, a "Capitulation of Fair

* Della Chiesa, Storia del Piemonte, p. 151.

War" was signed, by which both parties agreed to limit their hostilities to each other, abstaining from unnecessary outrages upon the defenceless inhabitants*. But this was not done until the 16th of August, 1553; and it is easy to imagine the amount of previous suffering which could prompt a soldier to so humane a measure. We have no wish to dwell on a mere recital of human miseries. Of all the scourges of Heaven—famine, pestilence, swarms of locusts, earthquakes, by which the ravages of war were aggravated—all of which signalized the reign of Charles the Unfortunate, and had not ceased at its end, we deem it superfluous to say one word. God had decreed the downfall of Italy; and it required no less than such a cruel combination of calamities to blast its prosperity, to break its stubborn spirit.

It would seem hardly worth while, in the midst of the general dissolution of the State of Piedmont, to follow the vicissitudes of its Prince.

On the first stroke of adversity, Charles III. of Savoy gathered up energy to change his meek motto, which has been quoted above, for another better suited to his new position: "Spoliatis arma supersunt."

He joined the Imperial General Anthony de Leyva, in his attempt to regain Turin: with him he met the Emperor at Savigliano, and accompanied him on his Provençal campaign as far as Nice. His biographers describe his subsequent movements, chiefly in the rear of the Imperial armies. Even in the rear he had once

* Sismondi, Histoire des Français, xi. 19.

a narrow escape of falling into the enemy's hands*. But we nowhere find positive statements of his personal exploits.

Stripped of his states by the French King (who formally annexed them to his territory in 1537, and established a Parliament at Turin), it was natural for the Duke to side with the Emperor, who professed to hold his own share in the name of its lawful sovereign. Yet there is no doubt that overtures were repeatedly made to Charles III. by French agents, and that, faithful to his fickle and ambidextrous policy, the poor Duke would have accepted the offered terms, had not Francis I. always been too hard and too false; and on the other hand, that both monarchs little scrupled to sacrifice him utterly; for even the Emperor, whose intentions were sufficiently honourable at the outset, was burdened with too many cares and bent on too many schemes, not to weary of the task of helping a man so decidedly unfit to help himself; so that the restoration of Savoy would in all probability have never taken place, had any means presented itself of otherwise settling all subjects of dispute.

Unwilling to the last to admit that Might was Right, the Duke had recourse to what he deemed the highest authorities.

He came in 1541 before the German Diet at Ratisbon, where he was entitled to a seat as Prince of the Empire, and protested against his spoliation by the French and the Swiss.

* Saluces, Hist. Milit. ii. 87.

Again, in 1544, he sent his ambassadors to the Diet at Spire, to complain of the unprovoked attack of French and Turks upon Nice. The Diet admitted the justice of all his claims, and promised redress.

With regard at least to the Swiss, as subjects of the Empire, it called upon them to give up Vaud, Gex, and Chablais to the Duke of Savoy, and even to indemnify him for previous losses.

The decree of the Diet was conveyed to Bern by a herald. The Swiss did not even deign to notice the summons.

Had they been at the trouble to look for an answer, the Venetians would have supplied them with it on a previous occasion. In 1530, they were urged by the Pope and Emperor to give up Cyprus to the same Charles III. of Savoy. They simply returned as an answer the words of the Psalmist:

"Cœlum cœli Domino, terram autem dedit filiis hominum*."

Bitter experience at last taught Charles that his case was desperate, and he sank into blank despondency. A long series of private losses came to aggravate the the burden of public calamities.

His eldest son, Louis, Prince of Piedmont, died at Madrid, December 25, 1536, at the close of the very year which marked the overthrow of the throne of Savoy. His beautiful wife, Beatrix of Portugal, survived the Prince but a twelvemonth (she died, January 8th, 1538). Seven other children she had borne him died in tender age, and the only survivor was at his birth

* Guichenon, Maison de Savoie, ii. 206.

and in childhood so feeble that his life was despaired of, and he had been destined to the Church*.

But that survivor was Emanuel Philibert; and he had scarcely reached his tenth year, when the genius and spirit he developed already revealed the restorer of the fortune and glory of his house.

The youthful prince found favour with the Emperor, who gave him an opportunity of winning his spurs in his German campaigns of 1546–1547.

In 1552 he came back to Piedmont, a youth of twenty-four, and took part in that random and desultory fortress-warfare with which the two hostile powers seemed rather to amuse than seriously occupy themselves. Fighting by the side of Ferdinand Gonzaga, he achieved the conquest of Bra; and compelled the French to raise the siege of Cherasco: he then took from them the best part of the Marquisate of Saluzzo, so that they had to shut themselves up in the two only fortresses that were yet left to them. But Emanuel Philibert felt that Italy was no proper field for his energies, and he once more departed to reap his laurels in the more earnest wars of a foreign land. Of the great exploits by which he was, as a conqueror at Hesdin, and the hero of St. Quentin, to purchase back his father's heritage, the latter was destined to have no knowledge in this world.

He died on the 16th of December, 1553, at Vercelli; and, as if fortune took pleasure in following up its victim into his very grave, that town, which was garrisoned by Imperial troops, suffered itself to be taken

* Costa de Beauregard, Maison de Savoie, ii. 232.

by surprise and treason by the French on the 20th of November of the same year. The conquerors plundered the apartments of the deceased Duke, and rifled them of jewels and other property to the amount of 10,000 crowns: it would even seem that they desecrated his tomb, since we are told that the very collar of his Order was taken from his neck*.

In December of the following year, Ivrea, Masino, Santhià, and Biella fell into the hands of the French: in 1555, March 10th, they took Casale by surprise, and obtained other advantages in Montferrat. The truce of Vaucelles (February 5th, 1556) confirmed them in all their possessions. War broke out toward the close of the same year, and the Duke of Guise, who crossed the Alps with a fresh army, equally possessed himself of Valenza (January 20th, 1557). But he pushed on into Southern Italy; and Brissac, left alone with a small force, carried on the war at great disadvantage, and was again repulsed at Cuneo and Fossano.

There is little fear of being too hard on the memory of Charles III. in stating that it was almost entirely owing to him that Savoy and Piedmont fell in 1536 without a stroke.

Even if a complication of adverse circumstances, or of errors on his part, had rendered the ruin of his state unavoidable, there was resolution enough amongst its subjects to save at least his honour.

* Guichenon, ii. 240.—Saluces, Hist. Milit. ii. 177.—Litta, Famiglie Celebri, Art. Savoia, tav. xiv.

We have seen that the nobility of Vaud, Gex, and Bresse insisted on fighting for their sovereign even against his orders. The people of Turin and other towns only laid down their arms after his repeated injunctions.

The mountaineers of Tarentaise and Maurienne, with more enthusiasm than discretion, rose *en masse*, and not only drove the French from their own valleys, but fell upon them at Chambéry and wrested that town from their hands—a daring feat, but unavailing; since the enemy came back with superior forces, retook Chambéry, and pursued the routed mountaineers into their own rugged homes, which fire and slaughter laid desolate*.

Aosta fared better. It closed its arduous mountain-passes against all invaders, and remained, during the whole of that gloomy period, unshaken in its fidelity, unconquered, inviolate.

The province of Canavese, with its capital Ivrea, also showed good countenance. The French were bravely baffled in their attack of 1536, though Ivrea had to surrender to Brissac eighteen years later.

Cuneo was suddenly fallen upon by the Marquis of Saluzzo, who acted as an ally of Francis I., in 1536. But that Marquis, almost immediately afterwards, passed over to the Emperor, and Cuneo, left to itself, set up the Cross of Savoy. It fortified its walls, mustered its citizens, and shut its gates equally against French foes and Imperial friends. It would admit

* Guichenon, ii. 217.

no garrison; it declared it would suffice to its own defence.

Twice, as we have said, did the French stand before it in all their might,—twice had they to fall back defeated. First came Annebault, in hot French haste. He must needs carry the place by storm (September 4th to 13th, 1542): but the only result was that he lost five thousand combatants, dead and wounded, in the attempt. In 1557 Brissac marched against the place with all his forces. The Imperial commander, Del Vasto, had barely time to throw sixty light horsemen and two companies of infantry into the place. But the walls were manned by the townspeople, *manned* by the very women. The Count of Lucerna was commander of the place. There was cannonading, mining, storming for fifty-six days (May 2nd to June 27th). On the latter day the French Marshal gave up the game; but three thousand of his men were strewn in the trenches, and on the dry beds of the Stura and Gesso beneath the town-bastions*. Emanuel Philibert visited Cuneo on his restoration in 1559. He rewarded its valour by raising it to the rank of a city (it was previously only a borough). Fossano had deserved equally well of its prince, and was requited with the same honourable distinction. At the same epoch the Duke contemplated conferring on the latter-named town the honours of an Episcopal See; but, owing to various causes, the diocese was not erected till 1592.

* Partenio, Secoli di Cuneo, pp. 132-135.—St. Simon, Histoire de Coni, pp. 206-214.

In 1536 Fossano surrendered to the French; but the youth of the town retired with the garrison into the castle, and there defended themselves until the Imperial army advanced, and the French in their turn were besieged in the city. In 1553, Brissac had again to fall back from Fossano, owing to the good countenance shown by the citizens*.

Still, the heroine of all the towns subjected to the sceptre of Savoy was unquestionably Nice.

Possession of her town and castle was coveted by the powers of Europe and Asia. France longed to establish her boundaries at the foot of the Maritime Alps, where the Romans had their own great landmarks between Italy and Gaul at Trophæa. Charles V. wished his empire to encompass the Mediterranean, and had twice found Nice in his path in his expeditions against Provence and Marseilles. The Turks sailed round those ancient ramparts of their Saracen forefathers, and looked wistfully at that Frassineto and Montemoro from which those daring adventurers, full six centuries before, had carried desolation over Burgundy and Lombardy, and into the very heart of the Alps.

But Charles III. of Savoy set as high a value on the place as any of those envious neighbours.

Francis I. had on various occasions been lavish of promises to him, if he would only allow the French to enter it. He was ready to restore Savoy and Pied-

* Muratori, Fossano, p. 26.—Casalis, Dizion. vi. 812.

mont in exchange for that mere barren rock on which the castle stood. Still the Duke replied that "he would die Count of Nice*."

In 1522 the Knights of St. John had surrendered Rhodes to the Mussulmans. They wandered over the seas in quest of shelter, and Nice was the first resting-place to the fugitives. Charles III. offered the Grand Master, L'Isle Adam, the castle of Villafranca and its environs. There and at Nice itself the Order abided, until the Emperor Charles V. gave them a new home at Malta in 1530. It is to be observed that during their stay at Nice the Knights of St. John were almost at home; as the Order numbered a great many Piedmontese nobles among its members, and some of them rose to the highest renown in the wars waged by Rhodes and Malta against the Turks†.

Since then Nice had been hallowed in the eyes of the Duke by the death of his consort in 1538.

The body of that beautiful Beatrix of Portugal was scarcely laid in its grave when Paul III. appointed Nice for the place of his intended congress. Pope, King, and Emperor all claimed the right of having the town and castle in their power during the conference. There were endless intrigues, entreaties, and threats. The Duke himself, in spite of great repugnance, would have yielded to the Pope's authority, and to his feelings of gratitude to, or dependence on, the Emperor. But the garrison here, as at Cuneo, was

* Guichenon, ii. 221.

† Denina, Italia Occidentale, iii. 47.

composed of native troops. These and the townspeople remained inexorable, resisting even the most peremptory orders of the Duke himself, shutting the gates in his face, and alleging their ancient charters and privileges, which forbade his alienating any part of the county, or introducing foreign troops into its fortresses.

The Prince of Piedmont, Emanuel Philibert, a lad ten years old, abetted the people in their stubbornness.

"Here we have," said he, producing a toy, a wooden model of the castle, "two castles, one exactly the image of the other, one as good as the other; let us compromise the difference; let our guests be satisfied with the wooden castle, we shall keep the stone one to ourselves*."

With this puerile *bon-mot* the matter ended.

The Emperor never came nearer than Villafranca: the French King stayed at Villeneuve; the Pope was lodged in a convent outside the town. There was neither congress nor conference. The two monarchs never came together. The Pope went backwards and forwards from one to the other, with great personal inconvenience, and not a little derogation from his apostolic dignity. He concluded, as we have said, not a peace, but only a truce (May 17th to June 18th, 1538)†.

The mistrust of the citizens was too well grounded, but dearly they paid for it.

* Tonso, Vita Emanuelis Philiberti, p. 25.

† Gioffredo, Alpi Marittime, Mon. Hist. Patr. Script. iii. 1345.—Saluces, Hist. Milit. du Piémont, ii. 57.

Francis I. had never lost sight of Nice, and five years later, sure of the co-operation of the Turks, he resolved on a great assault upon it.

The French were led by the Duke d'Enghien: their armament consisted of forty vessels and 7000 land-troops. Khaïr Eddyn (Barbarossa), the Corsair King, terror of the Mediterranean, joined them with 152 galleys, and landed 15,000 men.

The French tried treachery and stratagem, but were duped by the superior cunning and unshaken fidelity of four Savoyard soldiers.

Then, on the 10th of August, 1543, the fearful cannonade commenced.

On the 15th the garrison grew faint in the fight; the Turks stormed one of the bastions, and planted on it the banner of the Crescent. But now the multitude rushed forward to the rescue, a woman at their head: her battle-axe struck down the standard and its bearer; the assailants were hurled from the rampart.

The town held out till the 20th. On that day it capitulated: nothing but empty houses were left to the conquerors. All that had life or value had been withdrawn into the castle, even the sacred bells from the church-steeples.

For their houses also the citizens had obtained fair terms. The Turks respected them: the French violated all compacts, and the town was ravaged and burnt. Now came the turn of the citadel, or rather of the huge rock upon which it stood. Against it the

besiegers in vain spent their fury till the 8th of September.

On that day the report of the approach of the Marquis del Vasto with an Imperial army reached them, and the siege was raised.

On the 13th the Marquis actually came, and with him the Duke of Savoy.

That was a proud moment in the anxious and weary existence of Charles III. He struck a medal in honour of the town which had so honourably upheld the drooping banner of Savoy. The townspeople were not forgetful of the most brilliant incident in that memorable siege. They erected a bust in honour of the warrioress who had won the fight for the standard. Underneath the monument they wrote: "NICÆNA AMAZON IRRUENTIBUS TURCIS OCCURRIT, EXEMPTOQUE VEXILLO, TRIUMPHUM MERUIT."

This stout-hearted woman had not the charms of Joan of Arc, or of Jeanne Hachette, to boast of. Her name was Catherine Segurana, but her people nicknamed her Donna Maufaccia (Dame Ugly-Face). There was more in her countenance, at any rate, than the Turks could bear to look at*.

The Nizzards had at their head men worthy of them. The commander, a Savoyard, being summoned to surrender the town, answered, "that his name was Montfort, and his device *Il me faut tenir*†." By his side were Simon Balbo, of Chieri, with other Piedmontese

* Gioffredo, Alpi Marittime, 1387–1398.—Sismondi, Histoire des Français, x. 307.

† Guichenon, ii. 223.

nobles, who like him had won their laurels as Knights of St. John at Rhodes*.

The nobility of Savoy and Piedmont were not all equally true to their Prince in adversity. Savoyards, Piedmontese, and even Nizzards, were at this very siege fighting under French colours.

We have seen Solaro of Moretta, bearer of an odious message from the French King to his liege. There are instances of other lords who sold their castles to the invader. One of them, the Count of Crescentino, carried his impudence so far as to appeal to the Imperial Chamber against a judgment of the Ducal Court, and it was the Emperor himself who reminded the disloyal vassal that the Duke of Savoy was independent of Imperial jurisdiction†.

By the side of these sad instances of base defection however, historians give us the names of great families, such as the Challands of Aosta, the Valperga, Piossasco, Provana, Costa, Lucerna, Langosco, etc. etc., the members of which shared the miseries of the unfortunate Charles to the last, and were equally called to rejoice in the triumphs of his successor‡.

It is not without purpose that we have so diligently enumerated all these instances of the loyalty of the Piedmontese people and nobility. They contrast most luminously with the appalling demoralization which characterized that godless, faithless age,—the age of

* Denina, Italia Occidentale, iii. 49.

† Guichenon, ii. 226.

‡ Costa de Beauregard, Maison de Savoie, ii. 234.

Macchiavello and Borgia. By the side of the abject cowardice and wilful treachery which, generation after generation, undermined the thrones of Naples and Milan, till those countries were left a prey to foreign conquerors, the heroic deeds we have recorded show to the greatest advantage.

They contain a most important lesson,—a whole revelation of the only great principle on which monarchic power can be securely based. For the throne of Milan had been founded on blood and violence; at Naples it had been upheld by tyranny and iniquity: and it fell by the very means which had given it rise or increment. In Piedmont sovereign power was to a great extent the people's own work, and it had hitherto been generally exercised with great regard to the people's rights and interests. The people were therefore sure to stand by it or fall with it. And it is not a little remarkable that those very towns of Cuneo and Nice, which had fallen to Savoy by the most spontaneous act of dedition, were just those which not only proved true to the last, but whose fidelity was put to the severest test, and which came off with the greatest honour.

Ever since that age, with the exception of the slowly-expiring republics of Venice and Genoa, loyalty was a word void of all meaning throughout Italy, but a word still understood in Piedmont.

The same melancholy period which witnessed the occultation of the star of Savoy, beheld also the extinction of those of Montferrat and Saluzzo.

Boniface IV. of Montferrat left, as we have seen, two sons of his old-age at his death, in 1494.

The eldest of these, William IX., was at this period seven years old, and under the guardianship of Mary of Servia, his mother. Mary died in 1495, August 27th, and the marquisate was governed by Constantine Comnenus, her relative. William IX. however emancipated himself from his guardian even before he was of age, but fell under the influence of Louis XII., who married him to a French princess in 1508. He died in 1518, and was succeeded by his son, Boniface V., also of tender age, and who died in his eighteenth year, in 1530. The marquisate was now occupied by Gian Giorgio, the younger son of Boniface IV., and the last of his race. During all these minorities and feeble governments Montferrat had to run the gauntlet of all the great events of that period. It obeyed the ascendancy of the French monarchs when these had the upperhand in Italy, and was exposed to the vengeance of the Imperial party when the French were driven across the Alps.

Gian Giorgio had been destined to the Church, and had no apparent heir.

Savoy, Saluzzo, and Gonzaga, now put forth claims to his succession.

The latter, Frederic Gonzaga, had in 1530 been raised to the dignity of Duke of Mantua, and in that same year married Margaret, daughter of William IX. of Montferrat. His pretensions were put forth in the name of his wife. Those of Savoy and Saluzzo rested

on previous alliances and frequent compacts of mutual reversions, some of which dated from the fourteenth century. Saluzzo insisted, besides, on the common origin of his House with the expiring family, as both issued from the blood of Aleramo.

The matter was referred to the Emperor, Charles V., who, December 1, 1532, granted to Frederic Gonzaga and his wife the investiture of the marquisate.

The Emperor consulted here his own interests. For Saluzzo seemed servilely devoted to his enemy of France, and Charles III. of Savoy was hardly to be trusted with new states, since he was unfit to defend his old ones; whilst Frederic of Mantua was, by his position, a necessary ally to the Emperor; he had the means of aiding him with large supplies of money, and his brother Ferdinand (or Ferrante) was not only one of the best generals of Charles V., but actually the only Italian who ever enjoyed his full confidence.

The investiture granted to the Duke of Mantua was, however, conditional, and rested on the presumption of the inability of Gian Giorgio to obtain legitimate descendants. But Gian Giorgio married, April 29th, 1533, Julia of Aragon, daughter of Frederic, the last of the Aragonese kings of Naples. On the same day on which his bride was conveyed to him at Casale, he died suddenly, poisoned, it is supposed, by the Gonzaga, anxious to guard against the chances of future complications.

Flaminio, a natural son of Gian Giorgio, was relentlessly persecuted by the same jealous princes of

Mantua, until he fell into, and perished by, their hands, in 1571*.

The question of the succession was revived at Gian Giorgio's death, and left in abeyance for three years.

At length, on the 3rd of November, 1536, the Emperor, at Genoa, pronounced in favour of Frederic of Mantua; and the Duke of Savoy had to content himself with a sum of 80,000 ducats, which was paid to him as a dowry of Blanche of Montferrat, wife of Charles I.†

Savoy had, in this instance, scarcely so much reason to feel aggrieved at the Emperor's decision as Saluzzo, who had shown so much eagerness to purchase Montferrat by the basest treason.

We have traced the House of Saluzzo down to Louis II., the wicked prince who hoped to have cleared his way to the succession of Montferrat by the barbarous, and, as it proved, useless murder of Scipio, son of John IV., in 1485, and who was besides charged with poisoning Charles I. of Savoy, at Tours, in 1490.

Louis II. of Saluzzo strove to redeem his name by great deeds in arms, and, taking part with the French under Louis XII., fell ill of the plague after the fatal retreat of the Garigliano, and died on his return, at Genoa, on the 27th of January, 1504‡.

He left five sons, four of whom successively came

*Denina, Ital. Occidentale, iii. 19.—Litta, Famiglie Celebri, Paleologo, Marchesi di Monferrato, tav. iii.—Gonzaga di Mantova, tav. v.

† Guichenon, ii. 217.

‡ Muletti, Saluzzo, v. 393.

to the throne, but with whom nevertheless his race became extinct.

The eldest, Michael Anthony, followed his father's career as a soldier of Francis I. of France, and made the campaigns of Marignano and Pavia.

Italian princes felt by this time, although too late, that their position depended on their own warlike exertions, and the names of Gonzaga, Trivulzio, Farnese and Medici, Colonna and Orsini, Doria, Strozzi, Saluzzo, etc. rank as high in the records of those wars which crushed their country, as those of Lautrec, Chabot, Montmorency, or Brissac, De Leyva, Cordova, etc. Italy never produced better soldiers or captains than during that very period which sealed her destinies, and ushered in her degradation and thraldom. Genius and valour enough were displayed, blood enough was spilt by the Italians, but God had blinded them; all they could boast of high-mind, courage, and energy, was made subservient to the interests of their destroyers.

Michael Anthony of Saluzzo fought for the French, and fought well; but, after Pavia, he followed Lautrec to Naples, took the command after the death of the French General, was wounded, and surrendered at Aversa: he was conveyed a captive to Naples, where he died, October 18th, 1528, probably by his own hand, to escape from the sense of humiliation at his reverses or to shorten bodily pain*.

His second brother, John Louis, was now entitled

* Sismondi, Républiques Italiennes, viii. 214.

to the succession: but he had to contend with his mother, Margaret of Foix, a haughty and ambitious, profligate Frenchwoman, who had governed the Marquisate during the whole lifetime of Michael Anthony, and who now threw John Louis into a dungeon at Verzuolo, and wished to reign in the name of Francis, her third son, by virtue of a will extorted from Michael Anthony, which excluded his second brother from the succession. John Louis was, however, set free by the people, who loved him, and recovered his birthright; but Margaret of Foix repaired to the court of France, and charged her son with a leaning to the Imperial party. Whereupon the French King summoned John Louis, as his vassal, to France, secured him in his dungeons of the Bastille, and gave the Marquisate to Francis, the third of the Saluzzo brothers. Francis proved as stubborn a son to Margaret of Foix as John Louis had ever been. She tried the same arts against him, roused the King's suspicions as to the loyalty of this new Marquis; but Francis hastened to France, pleaded his own cause, and baffled all his mother's plots and intrigues, till the unnatural woman died of impotent hatred, in 1533.

Three years later the catastrophe of Savoy and Piedmont brought Francis of Saluzzo into the field.

He seconded the invasion of the French army under Chabot; he took Cuneo, Fossano, and other places, which he claimed from the King as anciently parts of his Marquisate. The King did not give in to all these pretensions so readily as his vassal hoped, and the latter now meditated treason.

Anthony de Leyva tempted him with the hand of his daughter, and with hopes for the still-pending succession of Montferrat.

The Marquis soon made up his mind. He passed over to the Imperial ranks, gave up Cuneo, and so disarmed Fossano that it should fall with but little resistance into the Emperor's hands.

The King of France, to punish this disloyalty, threw open the Bastille dungeon, and invested John Louis with the Marquisate. The released prisoner came to Saluzzo, where his partisans rallied round him: so that, while the empire of Europe was being weighed in the scales of fate between France and Austria, on the fields of Provence, these two wretched brothers were tearing with civil wars their paternal inheritance, and employed in the strife some loose bandits, the very scum and refuse of all armies, who had in those dolorous times been living at free quarters in Piedmont.

John Louis, however, was sufficiently confiding to come to a parley with his brother, near Carmagnola: he was arrested by him, and thrown into a dungeon at Valfenera, a castle on the hills above Villanova d'Asti.

The prisoner, who had always been inclined to the Imperial party, appealed to Charles V. for his liberation, and the French King, equally displeased with both brothers, now declared the Marquisate to have escheated to the crown.

Francis of Saluzzo, though by this time fallen from his expectations about Montferrat, still persevered in his allegiance to the Emperor, obtained from him a

decree in his favour and to the prejudice of his brother, and, re-invested with the Marquisate, put himself at the head of an Imperial force, to conquer it from his French opponents. But he was killed in an attack upon Carmagnola, March 28th, 1537, and at the truce of Nice, in 1538, Saluzzo remained in the occupation of the French.

Francis I. of France now sent the youngest of the sons of Louis II., Gabriel, who had been Bishop of Aire, to govern the Marquisate. John Louis came once more to recover his rights, at the head of the Imperialists; Gabriel fell into his hands, and was kept for six months a prisoner at Fossano (1543–1544). But he was rescued by the French and replaced on his throne. Gabriel was a man of quiet habits, and lived very inoffensively at Revel; but Henry II. of France, upon succeeding his father in 1547, believed, or affected to believe, that his vassal had, like his brothers, made overtures to the Emperor, to transfer to him the homage of the Marquisate.

John Caracciolo, Prince of Melfi, Piero Strozzi, and De Termes, governors for the King in Piedmont, and commanders of his forces, received orders to apprehend the Marquis of Saluzzo; they conveyed him a prisoner to Pinerolo, February 23rd, 1548. On the 10th of the ensuing July, he partook of a melon, and died soon afterwards.

Saluzzo was at last definitively annexed to France.

The darkness of mysterious crime hangs thus about the close of Montferrat and Saluzzo, as indeed about

every page in the annals of nearly all Italian princely houses.

The frequency of assassination had, it would seem, made the people incredulous as to any possibility of natural death. For one case of a prince coming to his end by violent means, ignorance, ill-will, and suspicion perversely conjured up a hundred imaginary ones.

It was not long since Francis, Dauphin of Francis I., had died at Tournon, of a glass of cold water drunk in the heat of violent exercise in the tennis-court. It was the same death to which Philibert II. of Savoy fell a victim in 1504; but in the instance of the French Dauphin, Sebastian Montecuccoli, of Ferrara, his cup-bearer, was an Italian, and Italians were always supposed to be mixed up with such deeds. They wrested by torture any confession they wished from his lips; and, on the strength of such avowals, they quartered him at Lyons. The execution was deferred, to allow the King time to come and feast his eyes with the terrible sight (October 7th, 1536). Grave historians*, at the present day, proclaim Montecuccoli innocent.

The same writers do not even allude to suspicions of foul play in the case of Gabriel of Saluzzo†. But the Italian writers of the period do not hesitate to charge two of their countrymen, Melfi and Strozzi, with having "peppered" the melon, of which Gabriel was too fond; and they attribute to Strozzi—who was, however, too brave a man for such murderous work—a secret wish to obtain Saluzzo for himself, as a suffi-

* Sismondi, Hist. des Français, x. 208. † *Ibid.* x. 405.

cient motive for the intrigues which roused the King's suspicion against Gabriel, and for the atrocious deed which hastened his end*.

John Louis survived his younger brother. He lived in poverty and obscurity under the Emperor's patronage. In 1551 Charles V. made another effort to restore him to the throne; or more probably he put forth John Louis's name to conquer the Marquisate for himself. But the attempt failed, and John Louis dragged on a few more years of wretchedness at Asti. Here, in 1560, November 9th, he ceded his Marquisate to Emanuel Philibert of Savoy.† But, in 1561 or 1562, he hoped to better his condition by passing over to France. There he made, in favour of King Charles IX., a formal renunciation of his claims, both on Saluzzo and Montferrat. In return, the King had been liberal of very fair promises; but these were, as a matter of course, shamelessly violated, and John Louis was confined to Beaufort, in Anjou, with a pension of 6600 francs.

After one year of ignoble captivity, this last of the Saluzzo died, in 1563‡.

Himself and all his brothers had natural children, and no house in Europe spread more widely in its collateral branches, several of which are flourishing at the present day.

Thus had those two Marquisates, which seemed in-

* Muletti, Saluzzo, vi. 282.—Saluces, Histoire Militaire du Piémont, ii. 120.

† Eandi, Saluzzo, ii. 416.

‡ Muletti, vi. 295.

tended by nature to form a part of the possessions of the House of Savoy, and to which that House had so long, and not always unsuccessfully, aspired, fallen to extraneous powers, at the very time when the European States were gaining consistency, and began to be circumscribed within well-defined limits.

France had advanced her landmarks into Italian lands at Saluzzo; and Austria—or Spain (for the possessions of the House of Charles V. had been divided soon after his abdication, and Milan and Naples had fallen to Philip II. of Spain)—had, through Mantua, penetrated into the very heart of Piedmont at Casale and Acqui. So little was there left free from foreign bondage, even in one of those few States which still bore an independent name in Italy!

For the rest, after those long convulsions which were the birth-throes of modern civilization, what was there that yet boasted a life of its own in the Italian Peninsula?

Milan and Naples, by far the noblest and wealthiest divisions of the country, were under the yoke of the Spanish House of Habsburg,—a yoke which the Two Sicilies bore for 250 years, and from which Lombardy was freed after 140 years, only to submit to the no less galling thraldom of the German branch of the same House.

Mantua, Parma, Ferrara, and Tuscany, were governed by princes who, with rare exceptions, almost gloried in their subserviency to the same ruling power; and all the families of these princes, after a more or

less brief æra of sloth and degeneracy, of baseness and corruption, of imbecility and impotence, died off ingloriously, and their place was, in all instances, taken by foreign intruders.

Venice and Genoa, haunted by ignoble though not unreasonable terrors, only maintained their position by a narrow, jealous, exclusive policy at home, and a system of time-serving compromise abroad.

Rome, utterly reft of spiritual power in one half of the Christian world, scouted and resisted with impunity by the other half, hugged with trembling anxiety that mere shadow of her temporal sovereignty, and sank to the level of the most shifting and wavering, the most improvident and suicidal of all Italian governments.

Thus, whilst the middle of the sixteenth century was the æra of a new, united, vigorous existence to most European nations,—whilst France, Spain, the Netherlands, and England, conscious of new powers, were taking their start for that noble race, of which the lead of civilization, no less than the dominion of the earth, were the stakes,—that same epoch was to Italy "the beginning of the end." It found Lombardy and Naples utterly extinguished: it marked for Venice and Genoa, for Tuscany, and Rome itself, the period of a long, lingering, unhonoured decline.

Woe to the Italian who can read the history of his country without the most poignant sorrow!

And it is with but scanty hope of consolation that we would fain seek in Piedmont an exception to this all-sweeping law of decay.

In Piedmont, also, there was humiliation and oppression: the ruler was often tyrannical, always bigoted; nor was the dignity of an independent country invariably asserted by a manly, straightforward, uncompromising policy.

The policy of Savoy, however, if tortuous and narrow-minded, was at least its own. It had its beginning and end at home; its strength was sought in the country and people. It worked for, and through, them only: hence a desire to make the most of them, to give them the best possible organization and discipline. The ruler's guilt might here be the result of error of judgment: but for the rest, he felt, throughout, that the people's interests were his own, and honestly and earnestly, even if not always wisely, endeavoured to promote them.

Now we do not suppose that equally good intentions might not often harbour in the breast of other Italian princes. But elsewhere, as in Mantua, Florence, or Ferrara, the ruler himself was altogether at the beck of a foreign power,—one power,—and that the most jealous, close, and bigoted in Europe. Spain bade every crowned head in Italy crush, by demoralizing, its subjects. She imposed her own rule on Tuscany and Parma, as she ever did on Milan and Naples. For nearly two centuries there was no will in Italy but such as was conveyed from Madrid.

But Savoy had her choice between two masters. She neutralized Spain by France: she steered between them: she shaped her own course. Hers was the next

best situation to that of a self-standing power. She was a useful and potent auxiliary. Strength and efficiency was the primary condition of her being. To attain it, a fair, clear compact with her subjects was indispensable. The Prince must needs rely on the People's loyalty: and these in their turn will exact respect, watchful care, a good and equitable, however despotic, government.

The development of the peculiar position of Piedmont in the new European combination, and the working of its government upon the people, is the main task of the remaining portion of this Work.

It is all that may yet offer some interest in Italian history. The real career of Savoy south of the Alps, may be said to begin at Château-Cambresis.

The edifice which the Counts had reared, and which Amadeus VIII. had almost completed in Subalpine lands, immediately crumbled under the Dukes his successors, and was all but entirely demolished under the ill-starred Charles III. With all the rest of the Peninsula, Turin and Asti, Saluzzo and Montferrat, were trodden to dust; mere wreck and ruin floated on the desolate surface of the old world. Princes and people had lost sight of their mutual relations, lost almost the very recollection of one another.

Had Emanuel Philibert fallen at St. Quintin, he might have cried, "Finis Sabaudiæ!" France and Spain (or Austria) would have bordered upon one another at the Alps, and the intermediate State would never have been missed.

But it was otherwise decreed. The Prince conquered at St. Quintin, and won back his States. He continued the annals of his House,—he began those of his Country.

For indeed, and in more senses than one, here, at this very crisis, where Italy, as a nation, has reached its end, the Nationality of Piedmont first comes into existence.

END OF VOLUME II.


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